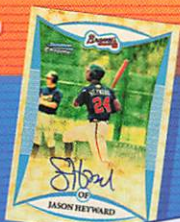


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#6 THE FINAL SEASON

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GETTING TO KNOW
HEYWARD

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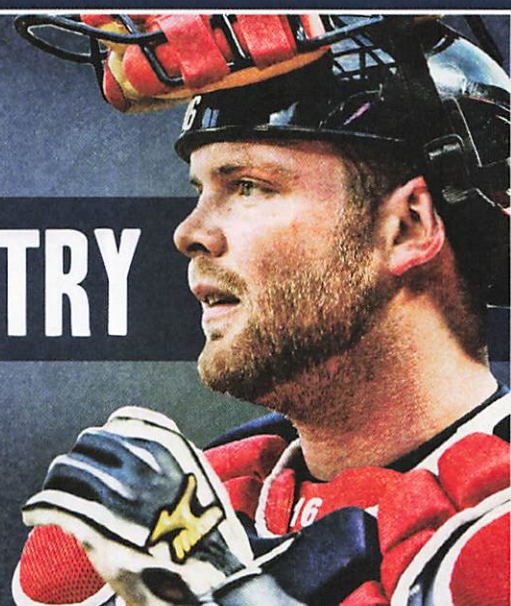




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S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					CWS EXH 7:00	CWS EXH 1:00
4	5 CHI 4:00	6	7 PTV CHI 7:00	8 PTV CHI 7:00	9 FSS SF 4:30	10 SS SF 10:00
11 FSS SF 4:00	12 SS SD 6:30	13	14 SS SD 7:00	15 SS SD 7:00	16 PTV COL 6:30	17 SS COL 7:00
18 FSS COL 1:30	19	20 PTV PHI 7:00	21 PTV PHI 7:00	22 PTV PHI 7:00	23 SS NYM 7:00	24 SS NYM 1:00
25 ESPN NYM 8:00	26 PTV STL 8:00	27 PTV STL 8:00	28 PTV STL 8:00	29 SS STL 1:30	30 SS HOU 7:30	

MAY

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						HOU 3:00
2 FSS HOU 1:30	3	4 SS WAS 7:00	5 SS WAS 7:00	6 SS WAS 7:00	7 SS PHI 7:00	8 FBS PHI 3:00
9 FSS PHI 1:30	10 SS MIL 8:00	11 SS MIL 8:00	12 SS MIL 1:00	13	14 PTV ARI 7:30	15 SS ARI 7:00
16 ARI 1:30	17 PTV NYM 7:00	18 PTV NYM 7:00	19 PTV CIN 7:00	20 SS CIN 1:00	21 SS PIT 7:00	22 SS PIT 7:00
23 FSS PIT 1:30	24	25 SS FLA 7:00	26 SS FLA 7:00	27 SS FLA 7:00	28 PTV PIT 7:30	29 SS PIT 7:00
30 FSS PIT 1:30	31 SS PHI 1:00					

JUNE

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		PHI 7:00	PHI 1:00	LAD 10:00	LAD 10:00	LAD 10:00
6 FSS LAD 4:00	7 SS ARI 9:30	8 SS ARI 9:30	9 SS ARI 9:30	10 SS ARI 3:30	11 SS MIN 8:00	12 SS MIN 7:00
13 FSS MIN 2:00	14	15 PTV TB 7:00	16 PTV TB 7:00	17 PTV TB 7:00	18 PTV KC 7:30	19 SS KC 7:00
20 FSS KC 1:30	21	22 PTV CWS 7:00	23 PTV CWS 7:00	24 SS CWS 2:00	25 PTV DET 7:30	26 SS DET 4:00
27 FSS DET 1:30	28 PTV WAS 7:00	29 PTV WAS 7:00	30 SS WAS 7:00			

JULY

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					FLA 7:30	FLA 4:00
4 FSS FLA 5:00	5 PTV PHI 7:00	6 PTV PHI 7:00	7 PTV PHI 7:00	8	9 SS NYM 7:00	10 FOX NYM 4:00
11 FSS NYM 1:00	12	13	14 ALL-STAR GAME ANAHEIM	15 PTV MIL 7:00	16 PTV MIL 7:30	17 SS MIL 7:00
18 FSS MIL 1:30	19	20 PTV SD 7:00	21 PTV SD 7:00	22 SS SD 1:00	23 SS FLA 7:00	24 SS FLA 7:00
25 FSS FLA 1:00	26	27 SS WAS 7:00	28 SS WAS 7:00	29 SS WAS 12:30	30 SS CIN 7:00	31 SS CIN 7:00

HOME GAMES AWAY GAMES Schedule as of February 2010. All times Eastern and subject to change.

AUGUST

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1 FSS CIN 1:00	2 ESPN NYM 7:00	3 PTV NYM 7:00	4 PTV NYM 7:00	5 PTV SF 7:00	6 PTV SF 7:30	7 FOX SF 4:00
8 FSS SF 1:30	9 SS HOU 8:00	10 SS HOU 8:00	11 SS HOU 2:00	12	13 PTV LAD 7:30	14 PTV LAD 7:00
15 FSS LAD 1:30	16 PTV LAD 7:00	17 SS WAS 7:00	18 SS WAS 7:00	19 SS WAS 1:00	20 SS CHI 2:00	21 FOX CHI 4:00
22 FSS CHI 2:00	23 SS COL 8:30	24 SS COL 8:30	25 SS COL 3:00	26	27 SS FLA 7:30	28 FOX FLA 4:00
29 FSS FLA 1:30	30 PTV NYM 7:00	31 PTV NYM 7:00				

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			NYM 7:00	NYM 7:00	FLA 7:00	FLA 7:00
5 FSS FLA 1:00	6 SS PIT 1:30	7 SS PIT 7:00	8 SS PIT 7:00	9 SS STL 7:00	10 PTV STL 7:30	11 FOX STL 4:00
12 FSS STL 1:30	13 SS WAS 7:00	14 SS WAS 7:00	15 SS WAS 12:00	16	17 SS NYM 7:00	18 FOX NYM 4:00
19 FSS NYM 1:00	20 SS PHI 7:00	21 SS PHI 7:00	22 SS PHI 7:00	23	24 SS WAS 7:00	25 SS WAS 1:00
26 FSS WAS 1:30	27 SS FLA 7:00	28 SS FLA 7:00	29 SS FLA 4:30	30	1 SS PHI 7:30	2 SS PHI 7:00
3 FSS PHI 1:30						

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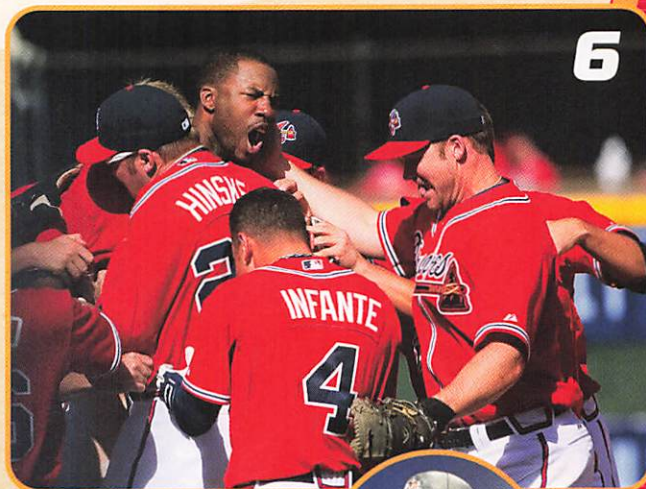
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AMANDA GRACIER



NEW YORK YANKEES

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Atlanta Braves

Jason Heyward:
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Design by Clark Odom



BATTING ORDER

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					CWS EXH 7:00	CWS EXH 1:00
	CHI		CHI	CHI	SF	SF
4		SD		SD	COL	COL
11	SF	SD		SD	COL	COL
18	COL		PHI	PHI	PHI	NYM
25	NYM	STL	STL	STL	HOU	

MAY

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					HOU	PHI
2	HOU		WAS	WAS	WAS	PHI
9	PHI	MIL	MIL	MIL	ARI	ARI
16	ARI	NYM	NYM	CIN	CIN	PIT
23	PIT		FLA	FLA	FLA	PIT
30	PIT	PHI				

JUNE

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
6	LAD	ARI	ARI	ARI	MIN	MIN
13	MIN		TB	TB	KC	KC
20	KC		CWS	CWS	CWS	DET
27	DET	WAS	WAS			

JULY

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					FLA	FLA
4	FLA	PHI	PHI	PHI	NYM	NYM
11	NYM				MIL	MIL
18	MIL		SD	SD	SD	FLA
25	FLA		WAS	WAS	WAS	CIN

AUGUST

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	CIN	NYM	NYM	SF	SF	SF
8	SF	HOU	HOU	HOU	LAD	LAD
15	LAD	LAD	WAS	WAS	CHI	CHI
22	CHI	COL	COL	COL	FLA	FLA
29	FLA	NYM	NYM			

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
5	FLA	PIT	PIT	PIT	STL	STL
12	STL	WAS	WAS	WAS	NYM	NYM
19	NYM	PHI	PHI	PHI	WAS	WAS
26	WAS	FLA	FLA	FLA	PHI	PHI
3	PHI					

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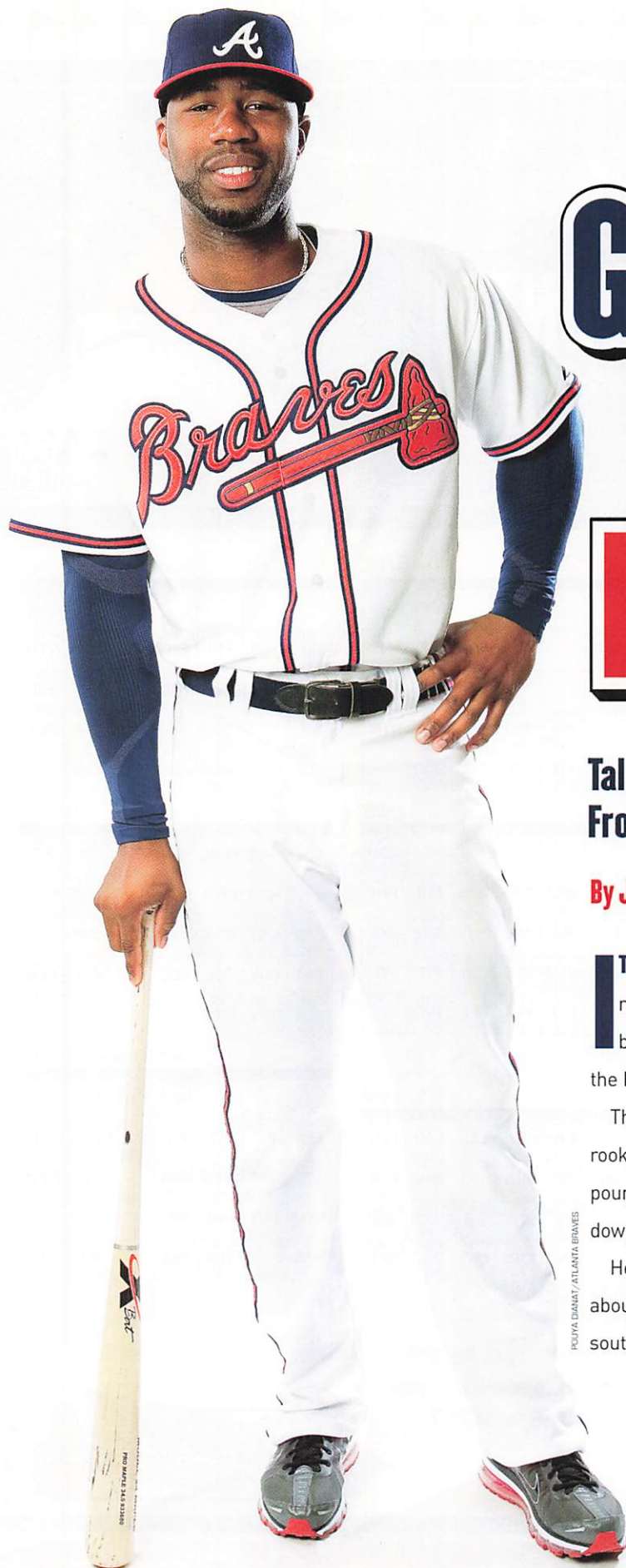


ESPN

HOME GAMES
AWAY GAMES

Schedule as of February 2010.
All times Eastern and subject to change.





Getting To Know Heyward

**Tales About The Rookie Sensation
From Some Of Those Who Know Him Best**

By Jon Cooper

IT TOOK JASON HEYWARD THREE PITCHES - and one swing - to make a first and lasting impression on Atlanta Braves fans by blasting a 2-0 pitch from Cubs pitcher Carlos Zambrano into the Braves bullpen in right field on Opening Day.

That kind of quick impact is nothing new for the 20-year-old rookie rightfielder. Can this youngster, who's listed at 6-5, 240 pounds but already seems larger than life, really be just a good, down-to-earth "kid"?

Here's what some of the people that know him best have to say about the newest Braves sensation who grew up about 30 miles south of Turner Field.

PHOTO: DANIEL/ATLANTA BRAVES

HOT COMMODITY

Troy Baker, athletic director at Henry County Middle School in McDonough, Ga., was Heyward's baseball coach in his sophomore and junior seasons at Henry County High School. Baker was head coach when Heyward led the Warhawks to the state championship in 2005.

Baker: "The first day I saw Jason was in his sixth-grade year. I taught at Henry Middle at the time and saw him on a daily basis in our P.E. program. There aren't many 6-foot sixth-graders walking around, and he was 6-1 at that time. Our jaws here at the middle school dropped. You can't begin playing competitively until seventh grade, so we're licking our chops like, 'Oh my gosh, we've got a tight end here... we've got a forward on the basketball program.' The one sport we don't play in middle school here is baseball.

"We're out there at P.E., and he's unstoppable on the basketball court. If we're playing touch football, nobody's staying with him. We're thinking, 'Here's an elite athlete that's going to break everything.' The next year, seventh grade, comes around, and he's not out for anything. That's when I met his dad. His dad came in and said, 'He plays baseball.'"

POWER AND PASSION

Brian Bridges is the scout who signed Heyward for the Braves.

Bridges: "I was in Columbus, Ga., for a playoff game his senior year (2007), and



[Heyward] comes up to the plate, hits an opposite-field home run, then goes out to center field. [An opposing hitter] hits a screaming line drive over his head, he runs straight back, jumps in the air, makes the play, flips the ball back in. Next time up, he doubles, steals third and steals home. I think that's enough to describe Jason Heyward - all that in one game, a playoff game."

Baker again: "The amount of talent in [the 2005 state championship] series [between Henry County and Lee County] was unbelievable, yet the shot everyone still talks about to this day is Jason Heyward's home run off [current San Francisco Giants prospect] "Buster" Posey in Game 3, the deciding game for the title. He hit a moon shot. You

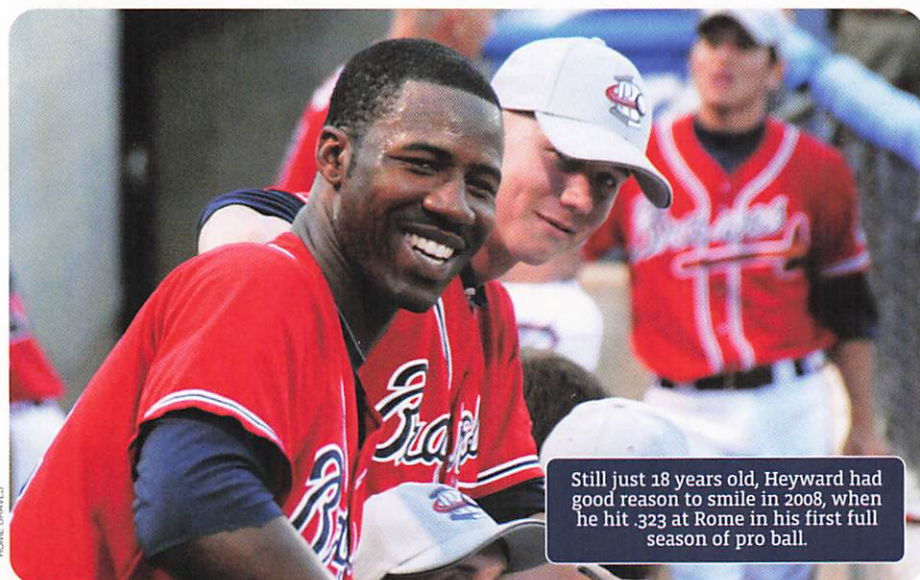
see what he can do now... Imagine what he could do with an aluminum bat in his hands instead of wood. There were probably around 2,000 people in Leesburg for that game. All you have to do is mention Jason at one of those high school events, someone's going to bring it up: 'I was there the day that he turned on a fastball from Buster Posey, and the ball hasn't landed yet.'"

Ronnie Richardson is the Braves' assistant director of player development.

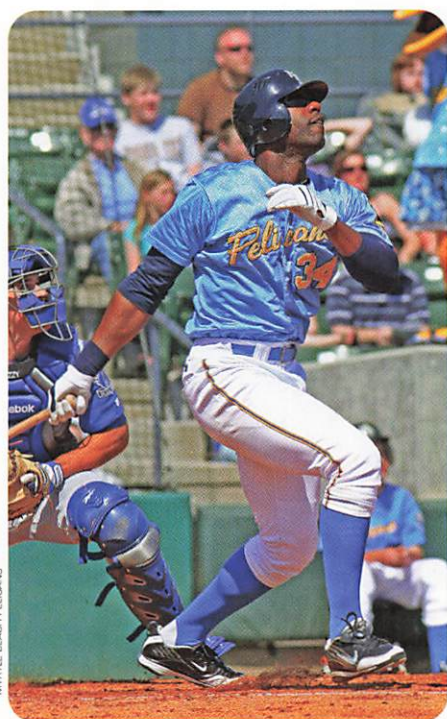
Richardson: "I saw the ball [Heyward hit during spring training] that hit [Braves assistant general manager] Bruce Manno's car. I was outside the outfield wall talking to one of our staff members, and the ball's coming and it hits the windshield. I called Bruce and said, 'Hey, Bruce, your car just got hit by a Jason Heyward flyball.' It's not the first time one of our cars has been hit, but the legend just continues to grow. We told Jason, 'You can break as many [windshields] as you want. You keep hitting them that far, (and) we'll keep paying for them.' We hope he continues to hit balls over into that parking area for many years to come. We'll adjust as to where the big guys park their cars."

WON'T GET FOOLED AGAIN

Bridges again: "I think it was at a LaGrange tournament... a pitcher went away from him and Jason fouled it off, and then he came up and in, and Jason took it. I



CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE



MYRTLE BEACH PELICANS

At Myrtle Beach, Heyward showed Pelicans manager Rocket Wheeler that he's exceptional at baserunning as well as at hitting.

guess the pitcher thought he had Jason leaning and came back inside. Jason hit it out across the street at LaGrange High School, a line drive right out of the ballpark. You could see that at any time. He would make adjustments. He never carried one at-bat to the next."

C.J. Stewart is a former *Chicago Cubs* draft pick and is currently Heyward's personal hitting instructor at Diamond Directors, a Marietta-based baseball development center.

Stewart: "The day before the Perfect Game National Showcase (in 2006), we were working really hard on him getting extension, because he always had a good swing and always made good contact. But one of the things that as his body was developing and growing, there was going to be a lot of power expected from him. We were working on getting extension so he could drive the ball. We really only had one day to work on that before he went to this huge showcase. When I read the scouting reports that night, that was all anybody talked about, how much extension he got. Getting extension isn't really something you talk about until you get to the pros. He was 16 years old. One conversation, and he applied it the very next day on a national level."

DERRING DO-ER

Ralph "Rocket" Wheeler was Heyward's manager at advanced Class-A Myrtle Beach (late '08, early '09):

Wheeler: "We were over in Potomac. He was on first base, and a ball was hit into the gap. He came around third base, and they lined up home for the cut-off relay. The shortstop caught the ball and turned around to throw home and his teammates yelled, 'Hold it! Hold it! Hold it!' The shortstop dropped his hand. As soon as he dropped his hand, Jason took off and scored. He did that about three times that season."

Phillip Wellman was Heyward's manager at Double-A Mississippi:

Wellman: "The first time I met the kid was when he walked into my office. He and Freddie Freeman walked in together, and you could just tell he was not afraid to look you in the eye. He wasn't intimidated, didn't appear to feel out of place. It was just the simple way he carried himself."

GOOD FRIENDS

Freddie Freeman is Heyward's best friend, roommate, and the current Gwinnett Braves first baseman:

"I met Jason when we were 16 years old at an AFLAC All-American Game in San

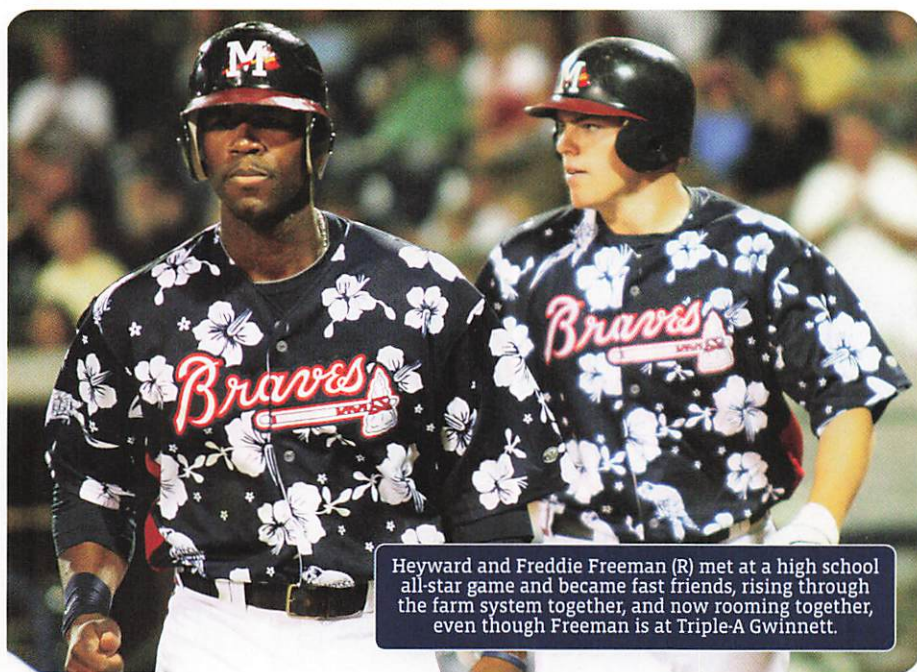
Diego. I didn't really talk to him until he got on first base. Then I started kicking dirt on him just for fun, just having a good time with him. He was saying, 'Hey, man, we're on national TV. Stop. Don't do that.' It ended up being a good thing. Then we hung out after the game and became friends there."

BIRTH OF A NICKNAME

Freeman again: "It was our first spring training, I think it was '08. We were walking and [Rome Braves hitting coach] Bobby Moore and [manager] Randy Ingle called us 'Salt and Pepper.' It just stuck. That's who started it. We turned it right back around on them, we called them Salt and Pepper."

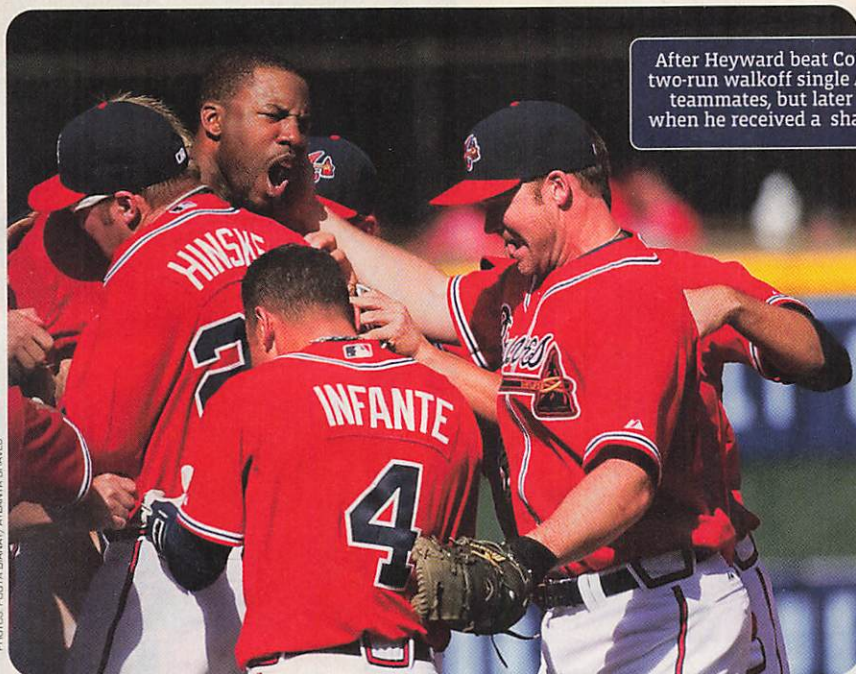
PAYING IT FORWARD

Stewart again: "This winter, Jason came home after the [Arizona] fall league, and he had just gotten some brand-new bats and was looking to test them out. He only had one - he would get more later. I was in the cage working with a teenage kid, Jake Swann, who was really struggling. I was trying to raise his confidence. Jason said, 'C.J., hold on one second. I'll be right back.' He went to his truck and gave that kid his bat. There was nothing fundamentally I could have told that kid to make him hit the ball the way he did after getting that bat from Jason. To this day, his confidence is on high because he got this Jason Heyward bat."

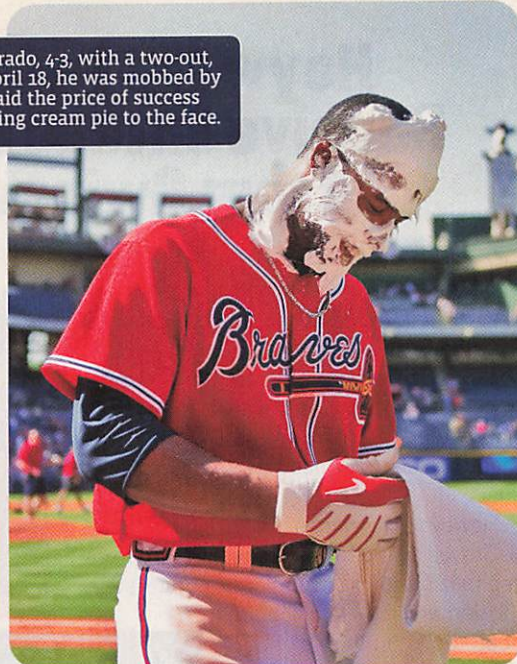


Heyward and Freddie Freeman (R) met at a high school all-star game and became fast friends, rising through the farm system together, and now rooming together, even though Freeman is at Triple-A Gwinnett.

MIKE JONES/ATLANTA BRAVES



After Heyward beat Colorado, 4-3, with a two-out, two-run walkoff single April 18, he was mobbed by teammates, but later paid the price of success when he received a shaving cream pie to the face.



Freeman again: "In High-A (Myrtle Beach) last year, he was hitting .067 for the first couple of weeks, and I was hitting .130. I was more down than he was. He just brought it to my attention. 'There's a reason that you're here. You wouldn't be in the lineup if they didn't believe in you,' things like that. In that instance, I was actually doing a little bit better than him, but we were both doing not-so-good, and he was just there for me. He made me feel so much better and made it a lot easier to play." [Freeman finished his stint at Myrtle Beach batting .302 and was promoted by season's end to Double-A Mississippi. Heyward hit .296 at Myrtle Beach, advanced to Mississippi, and finished at Triple-A Gwinnett].

Tammie Ruston was Heyward's British literature teacher at Henry County High School. Her son, Andrew Wilmot, was a teammate and close friend of Heyward. Andrew's tragic death in a car accident in 2006, inspired Heyward to wear Wilmot's number, 22.

Ruston: "During his senior year, Jason was doing all kinds of things in memory of my son. He was writing 'Big Willie' - that was my son's nickname - on his bat. He broke two or three bats that year, and every time he broke one, he'd write 'Big Willie' on the back of the [new] bat. I was at a baseball game his senior year when he broke one of his bats with 'Big Willie' on it. He gave it to the [coach's son], and you would have thought it was Chipper Jones giving him that broken bat. He was so thrilled. Jason

was just a senior in high school, but the kids looked up to him so, even at that point."

LOCKED IN

Bridges again: "I can remember watching Jason at the Perfect Game. I said to him, 'Now it's playoff time. You've got to turn it on.' He said, 'Brian, I play like this all the time.' It doesn't matter if it was pool play or tournament play, Jason played 100 percent all the time. He was never caught up in himself. He was caught up in being successful."

Baker again: "We ate on the road so many times. We were in a region that took us down to Macon and to Warner Robbins schools and those areas, and we would have to stop and feed the kids on the way back. You've got the kids saying, 'Give me the triple-cheeseburger,' 'Give me the Big Mac,' and there's Jason ordering the grilled chicken sandwich or the grilled chicken salad. He truly made an effort to take care of himself. That is so rare from a sophomore or any high school kid."

Richardson again: "I was talking to him one day in the Instructional League, asking, 'What are you going to do during the off-season?' because a lot of players have to work in the off-season. He told me that day that he was only going to have one job the rest of his life - playing baseball. He realized what he wanted to accomplish, he

made it a goal, he put in the time and effort to make that happen, and now he's reaping the benefits of all the hard work."

JUST A GOOD KID

Richardson again: "At the 400 Club Dinner, where he got the award this year for Minor League Player of the Year, he thanked all the coaches, he thanked all the managers, one-by-one. That's just a special kid to say, 'I appreciate Luis Ortiz in the Gulf Coast League, Paul Runge in Danville, Randy Ingle in Rome, Rocket Wheeler in Myrtle, Phillip Wellman in Mississippi, Dave Brundage in Gwinnett for all they did and all the coaches that helped me.' He didn't have to do that. He took time to make sure he mentioned those guys by name."

Ruston again: "He did an art project that was one of those where they used fine-point knives to cut out mirror images. It was on black paper with a gold parchment, which were our school colors, and it had a Hawks head - we're the Warhawks. It said 'Big Willie.' One of the other kids brought it to me after Jason was gone. I didn't know he'd done that. He's always doing things like that."

Wheeler again: "He missed about 25 games with us. [Hitting coach Rick Albert] had a line he loved to say: 'Those 25 games he missed, we missed seeing something special every day.'"

Heyward Bobbleheads Receive Enthusiastic "Nod" From Gwinnett Fans

BY BILL BALLEW

JASON HEYWARD played three games with the Gwinnett Braves at the end of last season. Based on the way he's started his major league career, chances of the Atlanta rightfielder returning to the Gwinnett diamond are about as good as a snowstorm in July.

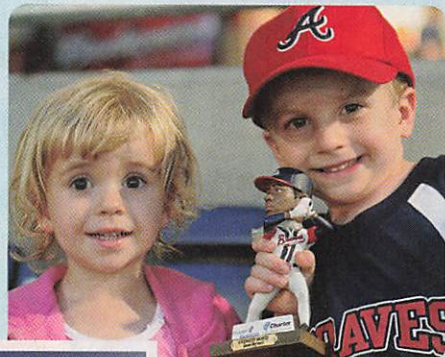
However, Heyward's limited stint with the G-Braves did nothing to keep the team from capitalizing on his popularity nor to stem the demand for 4,000 bobblehead dolls in his likeness given away at Coolray Field May 1.

A crowd of 7,876 - the largest of the season at the second-year facility - turned out for the promotion, with most of the fans undoubtedly hoping to attain one of the bobbleheads.

"We had calls from all over the country, including as far away as northern California," said Courtney Lawson, the G-Braves' manager of public and community affairs. "We were very strict that in order to get a bobblehead, you had to come through the gate. We weren't selling the bobbleheads - we were selling tickets to the game, with the first 4,000 people in attendance receiving one."

According to Lawson, a handful of fans bought more than one ticket with the intent of acquiring extra noddies. A few speculators purchased as many as 30 tickets. The G-Braves tried to offset the hording by giving patrons one bobblehead per entry, which forced those with multiple tickets to return to the back of the line after each acquisition.

Most of those interested in quantities of the Heyward bobblehead were looking to make a few dollars. That's understandable, given the popularity and collectibility of the dolls. Rumors bounced around the ballpark that some of the Heywards were listed on eBay even before that night's first pitch. A week after the giveaway, 23 were available on the auction website. "Buy it now" prices ranged from \$25-75, with most of the win-



The Gwinnett Braves only had 4,000 Jason Heyward bobbleheads to give away, but nearly twice that many fans showed up in hopes of getting one.



ning bids falling within that range.

Despite the threat of rain, fans started lining up at Coolray Field at 2 p.m. for the 7:05 p.m. game. Those who bought a bobblehead "five-pack," which included Opening Day tickets, as well as seats for the team's four scheduled giveaways, could begin entering the ballpark at 5:15 p.m. The

gates opened at 5:30 p.m. for the rest of crowd, which consisted of more than 1,000 and remained steady for nearly an hour.

"We received a lot of calls, including people who were willing to donate their tickets if they could get the bobblehead," Lawson said. "There was even one guy from out of town who said he would buy season tickets just to get one of the Jason Heywards. We called his bluff and transferred him to the ticket office. Evidently he wasn't that interested."

The promotion had to be scheduled before the Triple-A club knew if Heyward would open the season with Atlanta or its top farm team. However, there was no doubt where Tommy Hanson would be pitching, and the team was scheduled to give away bobblehead dolls in his likeness May 15. The Rome Braves also are scheduled to hand out Hanson bobbleheads to the first 1,000 fans July 24.

Jason-Mania! Buyer Says Paying \$7,000 For Heyward Baseball Card Was A "Bargain"

BY STEVE FALL



WITH ALL THE EXCITEMENT surrounding Jason Heyward's rookie season, it's not surprising that baseball card collectors are caught up in it, as well. But even diehard Braves fans have to wonder how one of Heyward's cards recently sold for \$7,000.

The card, an autographed 2008 Bowman Chrome Prospects SuperFractor of the rookie slugger, was purchased on eBay in late March. Amazingly, that card sale took place before Heyward's Opening Day performance when he homered in his first major league at-bat. It even preceded the Braves' official announcement that the 20-year-old outfielder made the club during spring training.

"What makes that card so outrageous is that it's literally one-of-a-kind," said Chris Olds, editor for Beckett Baseball and Beckett Graded Card Investor. "They printed only one SuperFractor, which has a patterned golden reflective surface and is serial-numbered 1/1, unlike other versions of that card. It's literally a name-your-price version of his best early autographed card."

The SuperFractor's seller, Eric Cuomo, a student at the University of Nevada at Las Vegas, began buying Heyward cards

in 2007. He purchased the SuperFractor in 2008, and drove from Hartford, Connecticut, to New Hampshire to pick it up in person.

"The card is special, being that is a true 1 of 1," said Cuomo. "It is also his best card, being an on-card autograph."

Cuomo previously listed Heyward's SuperFractor on eBay without selling it, but demand grew this year, and he received far more serious offers.

"It wasn't the card as much as the man on the card that interested me," said David Thomas, who purchased the card. "This kid is truly an amazing ballplayer. And I don't mean swinging a bat - the knowledge he has at his age is something special. And I couldn't give up the chance to own a piece of history."

Thomas, who lives in Memphis, doesn't consider the price excessive for a single baseball card. In fact, he thinks just the opposite is true.

"A price for a baseball card is only what someone thinks the value of the player or card will be in the future. Personally, I got a bargain at \$7,000," he said. "This kid is for real and will do great things, on and off the field. And now I feel like I am a part of it."

While no other Heyward cards match the value of his SuperFractor, there are other highly valued Heyward cards on the market. Among the 200 total cards that he appears on, there are 18 valued at \$100 or higher, according to Olds. Each is either autographed or relatively rare.

Heyward's 2008 Bowman Chrome Prospects Gold Refractor, which sells for \$800, is nearly identical to the SuperFractor. The Gold Refractor blends from orange at the top to gold to yellow at the base. The SuperFractor is a lighter, almost yellow color, all the way around the border. Scarcity is the biggest difference, as only one SuperFractor was made compared to 50 of the Gold Refractor version.

The attention generated by Heyward's play has made a huge impact on demand for his cards, and it's not just coming from Braves fans.

"Collectors are clamoring for Jason right now," said Clay Luraschi, spokesperson for Topps. "We've been working tirelessly to get him into all of our products in an impactful way. It's been nonstop since his first at-bat."

Topps named Heyward its 2010 Finest Baseball Rookie Redemption #1. Fans buying the Master Box of Topps Finest receive

one randomly chosen Rookie Redemption card, numbered anywhere from one to 10. Those who receive number one of this set - from now through season's end - get Heyward's Rookie Redemption card. And 10 percent of these cards feature his autograph, as well.

Given that Heyward had played just three games above Double-A before this spring, there is a surprisingly wide variety of his cards available. Bowman, which is owned by Topps, even has a card he signed at the 2006 Aflac High School All-America game as a 16-year-old. This 2006 Bowman Aflac Autograph card now sells for approximately \$300.

Not all of Heyward's cards go for such high prices. His 2007 Bowman Chrome Draft Picks card, although a popular item, still goes for about \$15. Should Heyward continue his strong rookie season, his card values will continue to rise. His early season performance has already made a major impact.

"There's plenty of interest and chatter about his cards across the board, so a price spike should be expected," said Olds. "They've been among the hottest in the hobby all spring."


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A Wife's Pitch

BY CAROLYN LOWE



VISITING BOTH SIDES OF THE RED SEA



Derek Lowe's sister, Deanna, and her husband, Kelly Delacher, enjoy the atmosphere at Citizens Bank Park until the type of heckling fan Philadelphia is famous for put a damper on the mood.

THE ARCH STANDS in the distance like a beacon of hope. The Gateway to the West. A sea of red surrounds me. Derek's at the plate with a man on third. Batting average: .000...

Line drive to left-center.... "Wooo!" I scream.

The four red-clad people in front of me turn around with perplexed looks. I never give myself up, but for some reason, I looked them in the eye and said, "I'm so sorry, but he's my husband. That's his first hit of the season!"

Immediately, the perplexed looks turned to smiles, and the folks said without hesitation, "Well done! You must be proud." "I am," I responded to the man in the Albert Pujols jersey with the headphones and binoculars. He gave me the "thumbs up," and returned to his score sheet.

In St. Louis, everyone - I mean *everyone* - wears red and bleeds for the Cardinals.

But I have also seen them cheer a great play by the opposing team. And so it was on this night when Derek knocked home a run. The St. Louis faithful sitting in front of a Braves wife cheered the accomplishment of her husband - even though he played for the other team. I'm confident they didn't

feel any less allegiance to their beloved Cardinals for doing so.

Ten days later, I again sit in a sea of red. But this time, the mood around me is different. Angry.

Derek's sister, Deanna, and her husband, Kelly, sit with me. They, too, feel the angst of the Philadelphia crowd. They thank me for talking them out of wearing their Braves jerseys.

Derek has yet to throw a pitch, but as he warms up, so do the verbal taunts. We ignore them. Heckling is nothing new. I've been to enough games in Philadelphia to know their fans probably invented it!

But then something happened I've never seen or heard before. A rotund, bald man sitting a couple of rows behind us started shouting insults at Deanna! Somehow, he knew she was Derek's sister. His tone was aggressive, at times even threatening. A new low, even for fans in Philly.

By the third inning, I'd had enough. With the Braves' help, security officers were alerted and came to where we were sitting.

Turns out we weren't the first to complain about this fan with the over-active vocal chords. For the sake of the entire sec-

tion, a security officer sat nearby until Derek left the game. I guess the officer thought the guy would cool-it after that. Nope. We spent the last three innings much like we did the first three, listening to verbal assaults. It was uncalled for, and it shouldn't be tolerated.

In Philadelphia, however, it's more than tolerated. It's expected. If you put a dollar toward our national debt every time someone explains it by saying, "That's just Philly," the U.S. would have a surplus!

That's what I can't really understand. Because some of the nicest people I've met on my baseball travels have been in Philly. It's like the City of Brotherly Love is a Tale of Two Cities. The one that exists within the unfriendly confines of Citizens Bank Park... and the rest of Philadelphia.

I made it my mission for the rest of the weekend series to try and find an explanation for the contradiction.

Every time Derek and I are in Philly, we go to the South Street Diner for breakfast. The food is fantastic! Derek usually gets the Hungry Man, which is more food than any one hungry man could ever scarf down in one sitting. I usually opt for the egg white omelet with cottage cheese.

But regardless of what we order, nine times out of 10, we're lucky enough to have



Carolyn Lowe (R) and her sister-in-law, Deanna, do their best "Rocky" imitations on the stairs to the Philadelphia Art Museum.

Genevieve bring it to us. She's the sweetest waitress I've ever met. She's prompt, always smiles, and strikes the perfect balance between making sure we're okay without hovering.

We love chatting with her - and she's from Philadelphia! So, I asked her what happens to perfectly nice people when they enter a Phillies game. She laughed out loud and said, "It's just Philly!" Unbelievable.

Philadelphia has such a rich history, so Deanna, Kelly and I decided to spend Saturday morning doing some sight-seeing. I don't want to say the Liberty Bell and Independence Hall weren't great. They were, but I still wasn't finding any answers. I needed a real Philly icon to try to bring some perspective to my dilemma.

We decided to head to the Philadelphia Art Museum, hoping its steps could lead us to the answers we sought. When we arrived, I realized how many people in Philly are apparently on a quest for truth, justice and Rocky Balboa! There had to be a hundred or so people scattered about the wide museum steps, and you'd be hard-pressed to find one who had a ticket to see the art inside! Like us, they were all stretching, humming "Gonna Fly Now," and readying themselves for the famous climb. Deanna and I, side-by-side, took the steps two at a time... laughing the entire way. To complete the shameless ritual, we leapt with joy when we reached the top and threw in a couple of shadow-boxing jabs for good measure. I'm sure we would have felt silly if it hadn't been for the three guys from Tokyo and the girls' crew team from Grand Valley State doing the same thing!

Unfortunately, Rocky wasn't at the top of the steps. Reluctant to admit my lack of art history knowledge, I asked the two guys selling "Philadelphia Rocky" t-shirts if they could help me find the bronze Italian Stallion.

"He's right over there," they said, as they pointed down to the left of the museum. There in a grassy cove was the nearly nine-foot southpaw with his arms thrust triumphantly in the air.

Although I was excited I tracked down Rocky, I realized quickly he was a bit tight-lipped, as far as icons go, so I went back to the t-shirt guys. James and T-I-M (not Tim, you have to say each letter!) were experts on

all things Philadelphia. Surely, they'd know why average, everyday nice people turn into maniacs at Citizens Bank Park.

Four Rocky t-shirts and \$42 dollars later, I knew where to get a good cheesesteak, but the only answer I had to my question was a shake of a head and the same words, "That's just Philly, man."

I was starting to get a bit frustrated when I realized if I really wanted answers, I had to go straight to the top. Enter Sister Marian and Sister Lucy of Sacred Heart Home in Philadelphia. The Sisters do the Lord's work, providing relief, compassion and peace to incurable cancer patients in greater Philadelphia.



Sister Marian (R, with Mets fan Sister Lucy) used to be assigned to Our Lady of Perpetual Help Home, a hospice on the south side of Turner Field, but now chops for the Braves when they visit Philadelphia.

As the Lord would have it, Sister Marian is blessed by being a Braves fan! (Sister Lucy is a Mets fan and needs all of our prayers!) It's not easy for the Sisters to get to a ballgame, but thankfully they were able to use their one off day in the month to help break the Braves out of their road slump.

I was all too happy to see them! As I approached, I realized Sister Marian possessed a courage that can only be described as divine. Over her white habit, she proudly wore a Braves jersey adorned with a "Braves" pin made of gold rhinestones.

"That was a gift," she told me, pointing to the pin. "Although, it may be a bit too much bling for me."

I laughed out loud as Sister Marian

explained the touching story behind her pin.

"It was given to me by a woman whose mother had just passed away," she said. "The pin had been hers, and the daughter wanted me to have it. I told her I would wear it to every game."

And so, she does.

I have to admit, sitting next to a nun at a baseball game is a first for me. I wasn't quite sure how to act. Thankfully, Sister Marian's warmth and quick wit were an immediate ice-breaker. I giggled to myself as I thought, "If I'm nervous about how to behave, imagine how uncomfortable 'Philly Fan' must be!"

Really, what a test!

Even if I never worked up the gumption to ask Sister Marian my frivolous question, the fans around us would have to be on their best behavior today, right?

As I daydreamed about Philly fans tipping their caps and smiling in appreciation, the Phillies started to rally. The crowd got loud. My shoulders tensed.

What did Sister Marian do? She stood up, pulled a foam tomahawk from her Braves bag, and "chopped" it in various directions.

I couldn't believe my eyes! Fearing I would have to hold back the masses as they stormed our row, I helplessly stood up next to the Sister. She must have blessed Kris Medlen with that tomahawk, because he got the third out on the next pitch.

Realizing Sister Marian herself was the answer to keeping fans from acting badly, I didn't feel the need to ask her my question. We enjoyed the rest of the game together, and she helped bring the Braves a much-needed victory.

With my faith in the fans somewhat restored, we walked toward the exit of the stadium together. As we approached the gates, a man yelled out, "God hates the Braves!"

My head swung around in surprise, but Sister Marian giggled.

"That's just Philly," she said.

Oh well, if she can accept it, I guess I can!

EDITOR'S NOTE

Carolyn Lowe, the wife of Derek Lowe, is contributing a monthly column to ChopTalk throughout the season.

GLAVINE'S BIG DAY: AUG. 6

THE BRAVES will pay tribute to the man that pitched his best when it was needed most on Friday, Aug. 6, when Tom Glavine is inducted into the Braves Hall of Fame and receives the rare distinction of having his uniform number (47) retired.

Glavine, who owns 305 career wins (244 as a Brave) and two Cy Young Awards (1991, '98), delivered the most clutch pitching performance in Atlanta history on the night of Oct. 28, 1995, when he pitched a masterful 1-hit shutout over eight innings when the Braves beat a powerful Cleveland team, 1-0, to win the only World Series Championship in the city's history.

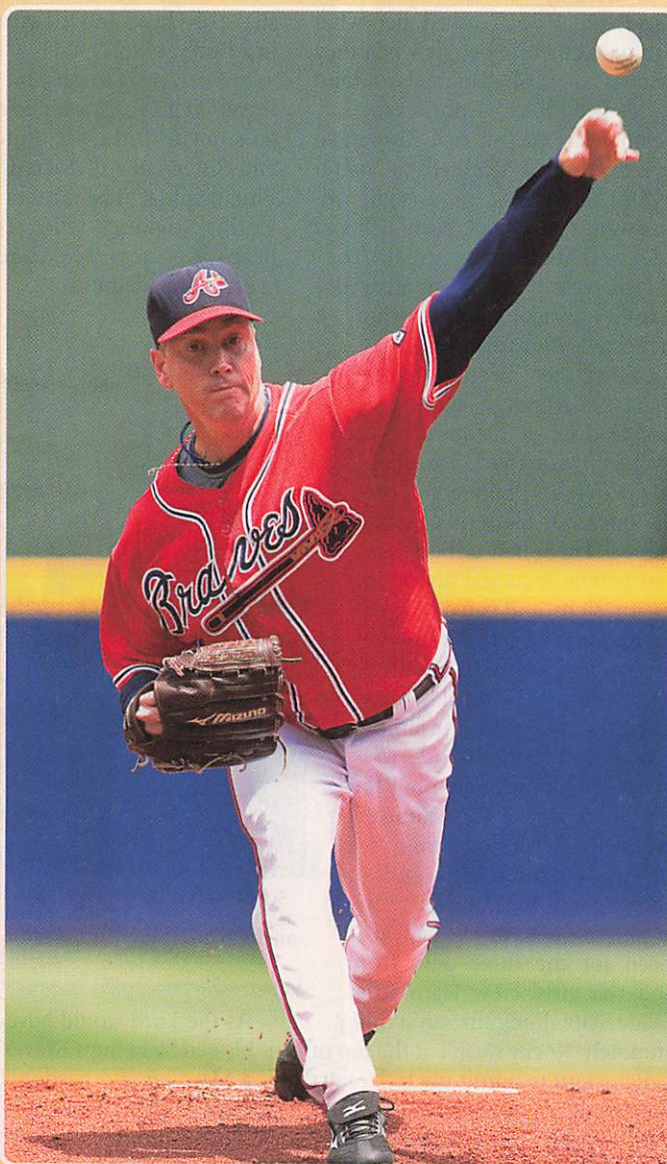
He will be inducted into the Braves Hall of Fame during a luncheon, open to fans, at a location that has yet to be announced. That evening in a pre-game ceremony at Turner Field, his number will become only the seventh in Braves history to be retired, following Greg Maddux (31), who received the same honor last year. The other retired numbers are Hank Aaron (44), Eddie Mathews (41), Dale Murphy (3), Phil Niekro (35) and Warren Spahn (21). The Braves also retired the number 42, along with all Major League Baseball teams, to honor Jackie Robinson.

"Tom has been, and continues to be, a very special part of the Atlanta Braves organization," said team president John Schuerholz. "There's no greater honor than inducting him into our Hall of Fame and making sure his Braves uniform number 47 is retired and finds its rightful place alongside other great Braves Hall of Famers."

Glavine, who is currently a special assistant to Schuerholz and is also a broadcaster on some Braves radio and TV broadcasts, spent 19 years in the Braves organization. He was drafted by the Braves in 1984 and was with the team through the 2002 season before he signed as a free agent with the New York Mets. After five seasons with the Mets, Glavine returned to the Braves in 2008.

He ranks 21st on the all-time career victory list, with 305, and he ranks fourth for most wins by a left-handed pitcher behind Spahn, Steve Carlton and Eddie Plank. In 518 starts for the Braves, Glavine compiled a 244-147 record with a 3.41 ERA. In 1995, he was named the World Series MVP after going 2-0 with a 1.29 ERA.

Glavine, 44 years old, will be the 22nd inductee into the Braves Hall of Fame, joining Aaron, Bill Bartholomay, Lou Burdette, Skip Caray, Del Crandall, Ralph Garr, Tommy Holmes, Ernie Johnson, David Justice, Herman Long, Bill



ATLANTA BRAVES

Tom Glavine, the fourth winningest lefthander in history, will be inducted into the Braves Hall of Fame and have his number (47) retired Aug. 6.

Lucas, Maddux, Eddie Mathews, Dale Murphy, Kid Nichols, Phil Niekro, John Sain, Paul Snyder, Spahn, Ted Turner and Pete Van Wieren.

For information about luncheon tickets, call (404) 614-2310.

WORK IN PROGRESS

AWARD-WINNING artist Steve Penley (below) was thrilled when he got the phone call from ChopTalk editor/publisher Gary Caruso asking him to paint a portrait of Bobby Cox.

"I was flattered and excited because I paint historical icons," said Penley, "and Cox is such an icon of Atlanta."

Penley's painting will be presented to Cox at the end of the season. ChopTalk also is offering fans, as well as Cox's players and former players, the opportunity to join the gift-giving by adding their names to the back of the special, eight-page commemorative poster of Penley's portrait that will be included in the September issue.

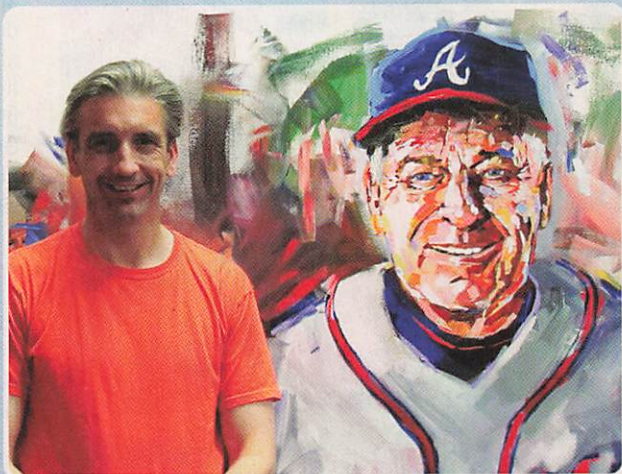
See the ad on pages 32-33 for details on how to add your name or the name of another fan to the poster, as well as information on how to order extra copies of the poster, including unfolded versions. A portion of the proceeds from this promotion will benefit Cox's charity-of-choice, the Homeless Pets Foundation.

Painting in his studio in Carrollton, Ga., southwest of Atlanta, Penley who often works in extremely large scale, is working on relatively small canvas, for him. The painting of Cox measures about 4-feet high by 5-feet wide. Still a work in progress, it features a large, smiling portrait of the beloved manager wearing his Braves uniform in Penley's unmistakable realistic impressionist style, using thick paints and heavy brush strokes. When completed at the end of June, the painting will also include three or four smaller background images.

Penley likes to work fast. The large Cox image was finished in a matter of hours.

"I think when I work fast, the energy comes through in the painting," he said.

This isn't Penley's first brush with painting Braves icons. He has also painted Hank Aaron, and last year created an original painting of Greg Maddux that was auctioned at the Braves Hall of Fame luncheon.



"This is special, though, because I have a sentimental attachment to painting Bobby," said Penley. "It takes me back to those days when they went from Worst to First, back before I had children, and back when I had more time to keep up with sports!"

- PATTY RASMUSSEN

BOBBY COX normally only visits the hill when he has to remove a pitcher in the middle of an inning. However, when the Braves were in Washington May 4, he visited another hill, Capitol Hill, where the U.S. Senate honored him. Cox was welcomed at the Dirksen Senate Building by Sen. Johnny Isakson (R-Ga.) and had a question-and-answer session with Isakson's staff and the staff of Sen. Saxby Chambliss (R-Ga.). Among other things he said he hopes that members of his coaching staff are considered to replace him when he retires at the end of the season.

Later at the Capitol Building, a reception for Cox was held, and he received copies of the statements honoring his career that Isakson (above with Cox) and Sen. Jay Rockefeller (D-W.Va.), a Braves fan, read into the

ON THE HILL



Congressional Record April 20.

Of Cox, part of Rockefeller's statement said, "He is so good and easy with people, and he takes them for who they are. And in the case of baseball players, he takes them for what they have, and allows them to achieve incredible things with it... That is why Bobby is an icon. He brings out the best in his players and exemplifies what the sport of baseball is supposed to be about - hustle, grit, loyalty and determination. It is why he is one of the winningest managers in Major League history, and it is why the Braves are what they are today."

The Braves coaching staff attended, as well as Tim Hudson, Brian McCann, David Ross, Chip Caray and Stan Kasten, former Braves president and now president of the Nationals.

ROOKIE'S REWARDS



PHOTO: DAVID J. PHILLIPS/ATLANTA BRAVES

JASON HEYWARD is cleaning up in the early going. His exceptional play in April earned him not only recognition as the National League Rookie of the Month, but also a set of golf clubs. In a pre-game ceremony May 14, Heyward received the Rookie of the Month trophy. He led all rookies with six home runs and 19 RBIs in April, and finished tied for ninth in the majors in RBIs. He added three doubles, 10 runs scored, 13 walks, a .520 slugging percentage, and a .360 on-base percentage. Of course, Heyward hit a home run in his first at-bat and with his very first swing. He was the youngest player to do so since Cincinnati's **Ted Tappe** did it in 1950 at age 19. On April 18 against Colorado, Heyward had his first game-winning hit with a two-RBI single in the ninth inning, lifting Atlanta to a 4-3 victory. Just two days later against the Phillies, he forced extra innings with a solo home run in the ninth inning to tie the game at 3-3. He had five multi-hit games in the month and five multi-RBI games. The set of golf clubs came courtesy of Callaway Golf, which made an announcement at the beginning of the season that a set of their new Diablo Edge clubs would be awarded any player that hit a home run measuring 470 feet or more. Heyward's Opening Day homer traveled 476 feet.

Jason Heyward not only won the National League Rookie of the Month award for April, but he also picked up a sweet set of Callaway golf clubs for his Opening Day home run.

BIG SWING

Martin Prado hit a grand slam May 10 at Milwaukee off lefty **Manny Parra** in an 8-2 win that was the first bases-loaded home run by a Brave since **Brian McCann** hit one July 25, 2008. The Braves went 253 games and more than 8,600 at-bats without a grand slam, which was the longest-active streak. The Braves were the only team in the National League not to hit a grand slam in 2009, and only the Angels failed to do so in the AL.

HAMSTRUNG

The Braves' starting rotation sustained a major setback when **Jair Jurrjens**, already out since April 29 with a left hamstring strain, was informed he will be sidelined at least until late June due to another injury in the same hamstring. On May 10, Jurrjens was running and believed he was recovered from his injury and nearly ready to make a start May 15. However, he fell to the ground in the Milwaukee outfield and had to be helped to the clubhouse. An MRI showed swelling in the lower part of the muscle,

and Jurrjens was ordered to rest for at least three more weeks. He was originally injured April 29 in St. Louis when he had to leave the game after the first inning. Jurrjens had the third-lowest ERA (2.60) in the NL last season when he was 14-10. He'll be replaced in the rotation by **Kris Medlen**.

ON THE MOVE

Matt Diaz was the latest player to be placed on the disabled list when it was determined May 15 that he will need surgery for an infected thumb. Diaz had a centimeter-long foreign body in his left thumb that was working its way toward a tendon. It's likely a remnant from a splintered bat that injured his hand late last season. Recovery from the surgery is expected to be at least three weeks. In his absence, **Eric Hinske** is expected to play more in left field, and outfielder **Brent Clevlen** was promoted from Gwinnett. Clevlen is a 26-year-old with 55 games of major league experience (Detroit) who was signed in the off-season

as a minor league free agent.

When **Jair Jurrjens** (hamstring) went on the DL May 5 (retroactive to April 30), right-handed reliever **Craig Kimbrel** was called up from Gwinnett. Only 22, Kimbrel is regarded as the potential closer of the future.

Yunel Escobar went on the disabled list May 4 (retroactive to April 30) with a strained left groin. He sustained the injury while fielding a groundball in St. Louis April 29. **Brandon Hicks**, a slick-fielding infielder who was the Braves' third-round draft pick in 2007, was called up from Gwinnett to replace him on the roster.

MIRACLE FINISH

Down 3-0 to the Phillies with two outs in the ninth inning April 20, the Braves rallied to win, 4-3, in 10 innings. **Troy Glaus** hit a two-run home run, and **Jason Heyward** followed with a solo shot to tie the game and send it into extra innings. Then **Nate McLouth** led off the bottom of the 10th with the first walkoff home run of his career. The



Braves were the first team in 14 years to have a walkoff win when three of their last four batters homered (Cleveland on July 18, 1996). Heyward's homer, his fourth, also gave him 16 RBIs through 13 games, matching Hall of Famer **Ted Williams** for the most since 1920 by any player under age 21 in the first 13 games of his career.

LATE HEROICS

Martin Prado had a walkoff, bases-loaded double May 14 to beat Arizona, 6-5, at Turner Field. It made him the fifth Brave to have a game-winning hit in a final at-bat victory this year. The others are: **Chipper Jones** (April 7 vs. the Cubs), **Jason Heyward** (April 18 vs. the Rockies), **Nate McLouth** (April 20 vs. the Phillies), and **Matt Diaz** (May 5 vs. the Nationals.)

A REAL WINNER

Tim Hudson won his 150th career game May 1, beating Houston, 10-1, at Turner Field. The victory raised Hudson's career winning percentage to .655 (150-79), sixth-best among all major league pitchers with at least 150 career wins since 1957. Those ahead of him are **Pedro Martinez** (.687), **Whitey Ford** (.667), **Sandy Koufax** (.665), **Roy Halladay** (.665) and **Roger Clemens** (.658). Ford and Koufax are Hall of Famers.

SHORT HOPS

- A Jason Heyward's** seventh-inning home run April 29 was the first for the Braves during their nine-game losing streak.
- A Troy Glaus' home run** at Milwaukee May 10 snapped the Braves' streak of 169 at-bats without a home run.
- A Atlanta's 4-2 win** against Houston April 30 broke a nine-game losing streak, the team's longest since June '06.
- A Jason Heyward** is on pace to draw 100 walks. If he does so, he'll join Hall of Famers **Mel Ott** and **Ted Williams** as the only players to do so in their age-20 season.
- A The Braves broke** a stretch of 13 straight games scoring four runs or fewer when they beat Houston, 10-1, May 1. They also had 15 hits in the game, their first in double-digits during the streak.

THE BENCH HAS PROVED TO BE A REAL LIFESAVER

WE FELT WE HAD A BETTER TEAM this year than last, and we still think we do. For a number of reasons, we just haven't been able to get it all clicking. We've pitched well enough to win a bunch of games, but we didn't win them because we didn't score the runs. It's the same story as last year in the first half.

There have been some real disappointing moments, especially during the nine-game losing streak. Overall, it just comes down to being too inconsistent, especially the hitting. But hitting is something that can be contagious. It works both ways. When you're hitting, it's contagious - and when you're not hitting, it's contagious, too.

We've had a number of guys struggling, and that just seems to compound it and put even more pressure on everyone. I think that's why it's been so slow coming around.

But I do think we're coming out of it. We're seeing good signs from another two or three guys, and that takes the pressure off the last two or three guys that are still struggling.

During the last road trip (May 4-12), we saw the guys doing a lot of extra work, taking extra batting practice, watching a lot of video, doing drills, everything they could to try to get it going.

You don't know what it's going to be that will finally make it click for each guy. One thing about this sport is that everyone's mechanics are different, and everyone has a different timing mechanism. You've just got to keep battling.

There's no one quick fix for the entire team. There's a combination of things each guy has to work through.

I think the hitting and pitching coaches are both pretty important in the big picture, from the standpoint of having a handle on the individual needs of each player or pitcher they're overseeing.

It's important to know what buttons to push on each individual, and they're all different. Every guy has a different set of needs and different drills and different words that will unlock their performance. The coaches have a big job, and I think they can have an impact.

Jair Jurrjens was reinjured (hamstring) in Milwaukee, and the reports are not good. He's going to be out for an extended period of time, and it's going to be a while before he can resume baseball activity. The injury is lower in the same hamstring than the previous injury.

Brian McCann told us that once he started wearing glasses in Milwaukee, he began to see great. He had some additional sets of glasses delivered so he can wear them hitting and catching. He feels really good and comfortable in them.

Eric Hinske, Omar Infante and Brooks Conrad have been real lifesavers. They're key parts of the bench we wanted to have to give us depth when we had injuries and also when players were in slumps and needed a break.

Kris Medlen will fill in for Jurrjens, and we feel very good about him. He's thrown the ball well, and he's well-suited for working multiple innings because he has plenty of weapons. We'll skip the fifth spot in the rotation when we can so that we'll also have him available in the bullpen. It's clearly a workable situation.

We're also very encouraged by what we saw from Derek Lowe in Milwaukee. He feels good about being more aggressive and pounding the hitters inside.

The telltale sign for every team is being consistent for six months, not six weeks. And I think we were capable of doing that. With our pitching, I still believe we can wear down some teams in our division.

“ WITH OUR
PITCHING, I STILL
BELIEVE WE CAN WEAR
DOWN SOME TEAMS IN
OUR DIVISION. ”

COX'S "MAN"



Bobby Cox displays the autographed and framed picture of Stan Musial he was given in St. Louis by (L-R) Cardinals chairman Bill DeWitt Jr., Red Schoendienst and Tony La Russa.

THE CARDINALS made a special presentation to **Bobby Cox** when he made his last trip to St. Louis as Braves manager April 29. The club presented Cox with a framed and autographed photo of Hall of Famer **Stan "The Man" Musial**, who Cox said was his favorite player when he was a boy. Making the presentation was Cardinals manager **Tony La Russa**, who is third on the all-time win list, one notch in front of Cox. He was joined by **Red Schoendienst**, a former Cardinals player, manager and coach who also was a key member of the 1957 World Champion Milwaukee Braves, and **Bill DeWitt Jr.**, chairman of the Cardinals. Considering the Cardinals swept four games from the Braves, it was the least they could do to show some hospitality!

DIAMONDS ARE WILD

The Atlanta Braves Foundation Diamond Gala, a night of casino games, entertainment, and silent and live auctions, alongside Braves players, coaches and alumni, is set for Sunday, June 27, at the Loews Hotel Atlanta, beginning at 7 p.m. All proceeds will benefit the Atlanta Braves Foundation and help fund the Foundation's community grants program.

Diamond Gala ticket packages include Braves Bucks that can be used to play casino games such as black jack, roulette, craps, Texas hold-em poker and slots. Guests will have the opportunity to play games to win prizes.

To purchase tickets, go to braves.com/gala or call (404) 614-1554. Individual tickets are \$200 and include \$2,000 in Braves Bucks. A couples ticket is \$400 and includes \$4,000 in Braves Bucks. The couples hotel package is \$499 and includes two tickets, a hotel room, and \$4,500 in Braves Bucks.

GIRLS' DAY OUT

Women who want to learn more about baseball can register for Baseball 101, presented by Publix Super Markets. The clinic will take place on Saturday, June 19 at Turner Field, and women 18 years of age

and older can sign up online at braves.com/baseball101 or call (404) 494-1020.

Baseball 101 provides the opportunity to learn batting, fielding and pitching skills from Braves players and coaches. In addition to the on-field clinic, a variety of Braves "guest professors" will host a panel discussion on topics such as scouting, player development, the nuances of baseball, nutrition and fitness. The clinic will end with a behind-the-scenes tour of Turner Field.

Registration, which includes two tickets to that night's 7 p.m. game vs. the Kansas City Royals, is \$82 for the Upper Box Package and \$112 for the Outfield Package with proceeds benefiting the Atlanta Braves Foundation and the **Doris Shaheen** Breast Health Center at Piedmont Hospital. The registration fee also includes lunch, a Baseball 101 t-shirt, and a Braves gift bag with an autographed item.

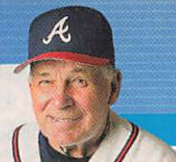
THE KIDS ARE COMING

The Braves will host the second annual Atlanta Braves Youth Baseball Classic, presented by Bank of America, July 16-18, at the Atlanta Braves Baseball Academy. Thirty-two teams with players aged 5-12 will compete in the pool-play style tourna-

ment, take a team photo with an Atlanta Braves player, attend the Braves vs. Brewers game Saturday night at Turner Field, and participate in a parade around the warning track before the game. All players will receive an official Atlanta Braves Youth Baseball Classic T-shirt, Braves gift bag and commemorative medal. Registration is open at braves.com/youthclassic.



Can any fan watch a game more intently than this Boston Terrier is doing at the May 2 Bark in The Park?



Thirty-two youth teams, made up of 450 players from Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina and Tennessee, participated in the event last September.

STRIKE UP THE BANDS

The lineup is set for this year's Braves Band of the Year competition. Fans can buy discounted tickets to support their favorite musical group. Outfield Pavilion tickets, normally \$28, are available for \$14, and Upper Box seats, normally \$12, are available for \$6, through a special Band of the Year offer, available at braves.com/bravesbands.

More than 150 bands applied for consideration in the competition, and 14 were selected to perform before Braves home games. The group named the Braves Band of the Year will win a free suite to the season's final home game. The Braves game entertainment staff will judge the groups, based on combination of factors including fan support, crowd participation and enthusiasm. Upcoming performances are: May 29 - Eleven Standing Still; June 18 - Space Capone; June 19 - Holdcell; June 26 - Radagun; July 3 - Clap for Daylight; July 4 - Sugar Red Drive; July 17 - Life & Limb; Aug. 7 - Simple Alliance; Aug. 14 - Thomas Tillman; Aug. 28 - After Edmund; Sept. 11 - Jeff Shephard Band.

GROCERY LIST

Braves players, coaches and alumni are scheduled to meet fans and assist customers June 18 (12-1:30 p.m.) at the Carmia Drive Publix off Camp Creek Parkway and July 16 (12-1:30 p.m.) at the Toco Hills Publix on N. Druid Hills Rd. in the Shop With The Braves program. **David Ross, Jesse Chavez, Eddie Perez, Charlie Leibrandt** and **Zane Smith** appeared at the Johns Creek Publix on April 21. The Braves bag groceries, assist in the deli, help prepare samples, and sign autographs.

BALLS & STRIKES

A The Braves held the first Bark in the Park of the season May 2. The next one is scheduled Aug. 29. Fans must register their dogs in advance.

A Braves Hall of Fame broadcaster **Pete Van Wieren** was scheduled to sign copies of his book "Of Mikes and Men," before the May 29 game in the Braves Clubhouse Store in Fan Plaza.

THIS TEAM WILL KEEP SCRAPPING FOR WINS

WE PROBABLY won't get Jair Jurrjens back for four to six weeks, mid-to-late June at the earliest. He had an MRI when we got back from Milwaukee (May 13) that showed blood in his strained left hamstring but no tear, and he needs to have time to heal completely. He'll be out for at least three weeks, but then he'll have to build up his strength.

It's tough, both for us and for him. I feel bad for JJ, because he came over to spring training with a sore shoulder. He got that straightened out, but then got jammed hitting, and his right thumb swelled up and he had trouble fielding the ball. Then he got a few starts and pulled a hamstring.

He's had a tough start and is going to end up missing close to half the season. It's pretty bad news, because this guy is an ace.

Thank God for Kris Medlen. He's going to fill in, and he's been great. Medlen is so important because we could use him in big situations out of the bullpen, plus he could spot start, which he did in Philadelphia.

I didn't have a clue that Brian McCann was having trouble with his eyesight. He wasn't hitting like the Brian we all knew, but I felt he would come around. He's seeing the ball now.

No player wants to go to his manager and say they're having trouble or they're hurt. They want to wait and see if it will go away or get better without having to cause any turmoil. In Brian's case, the solution was pretty easy. He went back to the glasses he wore last year, and he'll be fine.

I think our team is starting to come around and hit like we thought they could. It's a question of consistency. The other thing we kept seeing was hard-hit balls going right at someone. It seemed like Martin Prado, who was one of the most consistent hitters on the team, kept hitting rockets right into a fielder's glove.

Troy Glaus started heating up when we were on the road. He hit in bad luck for the longest time, but he's hitting them now where they can't catch them. He's been great at first base on some bad throws, really showing his range. He hasn't had a ton of experience but he's done great.

The coaches decided to have a little fun in Milwaukee. We always forget to take a picture of just us coaches, so this year Terry Pendleton came up the idea of getting these suits in Milwaukee. He and Eddie Perez set it up with the clothing store for us to get fitted and take the picture. We had a professional photographer take the picture, all of us in the clubhouse, and (then) changed out of the suits.

They were pretty crazy. The suit I wore had an orange jacket and white cap. TP was wearing a purple, three-piece suit, and Eddie wore a bright blue suit and a white fedora with white shoes.

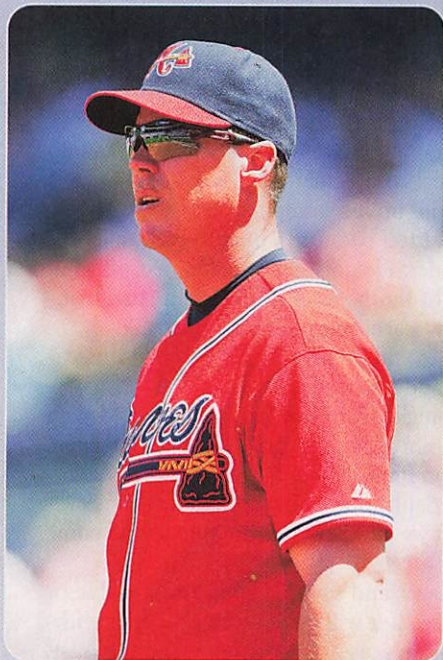
I said after the picture, "We have to wear these on the way home, but if we're going to wear them, we'd better win!"

After the game, which we did win, we changed into our suits. The players hadn't seen us, and they were shocked. They loved it. It was light-hearted fun, and it's good to do stuff like that once in a while.

We've had an up-and-down start - there's no doubt about that. We've lost a couple of guys to injuries, but we're glad we have depth on our bench. We've already seen how valuable Eric Hinske and Omar Infante are.

This team is going to keep grinding and fighting for wins. There's an awful lot of baseball yet to be played.

"THE SUIT I WORE HAD AN ORANGE JACKET AND WHITE CAP. TP WAS WEARING A PURPLE, THREE-PIECE SUIT..."



INTERVIEW BY
PATTY RASMUSSEN

CHOPTALK: You said in last month's ChopTalk that you shaved the beard because your wife liked you clean shaven, but are you getting ready to grow it back?

CHIPPER JONES: (Laughs) I'm about ready for it to come back. I nicknamed it "The Hittin' Patch," and Sharon had a catchy little nickname for it, too. When I was hurt all the time, she called it "The Sittin' Patch." (Laughs) She's a sparkplug. But I think it's gonna have to make an appearance again pretty soon. I know for a fact that it will be back later in the season as the hunting season nears.

CT: Billy Wagner has already announced that this will be his last year playing because he wants to go home to be with his kids. When you heard that, did you feel any tug? Have you thought, "This could be it for me?"

CHIPPER: There's no doubt I thought that. Whether to retire or not has probably been the number-one thing on my mind since we started spring training. I'm really starting to pay attention to the details now. Whether I really enjoy coming to the park, whether I really enjoy playing between the

Chipper, who turned 38 on April 24, was hitting .239 through the first 34 games of the season after hitting .264 last year.

lines, whether I enjoy the travel, dealing with the media, some of the politics... the hoops you have to jump through. All that kind of stuff I've really started paying attention to. Whenever something comes up, you ask yourself, "Do I really want to do this thing?" There are mixed reviews. I don't know the answer yet. It's a decision that I'll probably make later in the season.

CT: You said last year that you would retire at the end of this season if you weren't performing to your expectations. Understanding that it's early in the season, do you still feel you're capable of playing at the level you want to play?

CHIPPER: As we sit here, I'm swinging the bat well, but I can't buy a hit. I think I'm 0-for-7 in a series where I've hit the ball hard five or six times. There's nothing you can do about that. I think the production will get better, and yes, I think I can be productive. Having fun is going to be a big factor in whether I play or not. All those things I mentioned earlier. I could call it a career at the end of this season and be totally fine with it. I'm missing a [Little League] game today two of my kids are playing. I missed one yes-

and make the decision at that time.

CT: Broadcaster and your former Braves' teammate Brian Jordan made comments in a radio interview with the MLB Network questioning your preparation and dedication to being prepared to play after you missed three games with a sore oblique. How did you feel when you heard them? Have you two spoken? Do you feel his comments have merit?

CHIPPER: I felt disappointment. Brian was here, but he was here (playing) a long time ago (last season was 2006). There's no doubt that back in the day, I used to "show and go." I could roll out of the car or roll out of bed and play at a very high level. I realized that I can't do that any more and have taken the necessary precautions to try and stay healthy. But we're talking about an injury that cost me three games this year. It's very petty, the fact that we're even talking about a three-day stint that I didn't play. The oblique has kept me out for a month in the past. This was just a tweak and a precaution. I realize he was stating his opinion, when asked. The only problem that I have was when he said something to the affect that he didn't know "whether Chipper cared enough to keep himself up." That bothers me. He's not in the weight room with me. He's not stretching with me. He's not seeing

“WHETHER TO RETIRE OR NOT HAS PROBABLY BEEN THE NUMBER-ONE THING ON MY MIND SINCE WE STARTED SPRING TRAINING.”

terday. Nine-day road trips take a toll on you. Those are things that will factor in and be weighed pretty heavily. I've already talked to Sharon, my dad and mom. I'm not set in any way. It's a process that will play itself out. I've let everyone know that I know the time is near and this could possibly be it. I'm not rushing into that decision, and I certainly don't want to make that decision when I'm hitting .200. I'd much rather make it when I'm hitting .300, because then I know I'm producing. It won't be an emotional decision. It's easy, in the twilight of your career, when you're having a rough go, to say, "This is it," but I want to be on the upswing and know that I'm playing well and producing,

me do the things I do to prepare myself to play. Go ask Phil Falco (strength and conditioning coach). I've been more dedicated this year to trying to keep my obliques stretched out from both sides so that there's no problem. The bottom line is, you go out and swing at 110 percent one time, swing hard, and sometimes stuff breaks. I just thought that the one comment about me not caring enough was an ignorant statement. To B.J.'s credit, he came up to me, man-to-man, face-to-face, which I totally expected him to do, and apologized to me. I don't have any ill will. I just wish that when it comes to me, he would make a more informed diagnosis.

CT: You've been part of this team for a long time (since late 1993), including the 2006 team that lost 10 straight. Can you put your finger on one thing during this year's nine-game losing streak? No hitting, sloppy defense, mental miscues, or just plain bad luck?

CHIPPER: Throughout it all, it was a little bit of all those things, with the exception of New York where we just... well, that New York series was probably the worst three-game series I've ever been part of, and most of it was because of me, not being able to catch a popup in the wind. Bad offense, mental mistakes... we just couldn't get out of our own way. We played solid in St. Louis, lost a couple of close games. Seems like when you're in a nine-game losing streak, every tie (close call) doesn't go to you. You need a big called strike three, and you don't get the close pitch. Two outs, you gotta make a pitch to get yourself out of the inning, and someone bloop one in. It's really demoralizing. I said it when we left St. Louis, "We will win another game." The bleeding will be stopped. I told everyone before the series (at home) against Houston, by the end of the weekend, we could be talking about a winning streak (the Braves swept the Astros). The game is like that. It's cyclical. It happens to everybody.

CT: How are you feeling physically? You've already been out of the lineup twice due to minor, but nagging, injuries (strained right

oblique, sore right hip). Are they related in any way? Have you been compensating? Do you feel that you can play every day?

CHIPPER: I don't know if they're related, but it could be. All I know is that the oblique hurt to swing left-handed, and the hip hurts to swing right-handed, because of a little pushoff move in the right leg that has caused some pain. I don't foresee it keeping me out of games. It's been fine, and I've had some good at-bats. I'm not worried about it. I'm not looking at missing significant time other than an occasional day off. Bobby gave me the day off in St. Louis (April 29), and I don't ever

fun, and not worry about being intense for three hours.

CT: How much does the mental aspect of a losing streak affect your physical game?

CHIPPER: It's definitely a factor, but the good thing about this team is that every day everyone thought, "Today's gonna be the day." We really had that mindset. That said, when the first inning came along and we gave up three runs, the thought was, "Oh no, here we go again." It was like that for the last three or four games of that stretch. But as I said,

" I'VE ALREADY TALKED TO SHARON, MY DAD AND MOM... I'VE LET EVERYONE KNOW THAT I KNOW THE TIME IS NEAR AND THIS COULD POSSIBLY BE IT. "

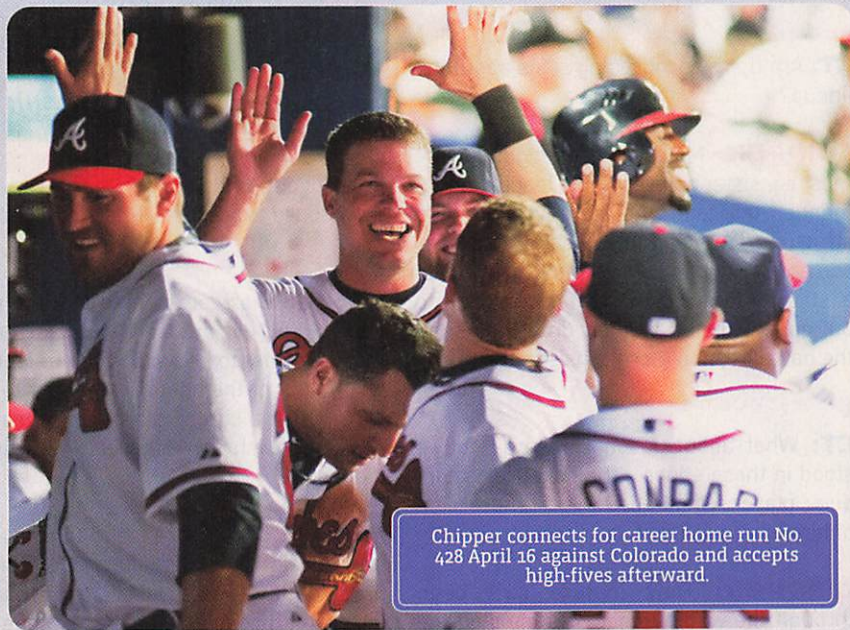
remember him giving me a day off just to have a "mental day." For him to not say anything, for me to just show up and not see my name in the lineup, that was a little different.

CT: Different in what way? Were you disappointed?

CHIPPER: I appreciated it. I was tired. I played every day on the road trip, and I was struggling. Old guys need mental days, too! Young guys can get in a funk. But older fellows need those days where they sit back, watch the game on the bench, have a little

we knew we were going to run into somebody who didn't have their A-game. One of our pitchers is gonna be hot, and we'll start playing teams that other teams in our division have been getting fat on and things turn around. We did have a tough April schedule, certainly. We've seen the top four or five guys in Cy Young balloting in the first month. And they're all dealing. Now that we're cycling through the league, I think you'll see our offensive numbers creeping up.

CT: Have you been disappointed in the performance of this team early, or were expect-



Chipper connects for career home run No. 428 April 16 against Colorado and accepts high-fives afterward.

PHOTOS: POUYA DANAAT/ATLANTA BRAVES

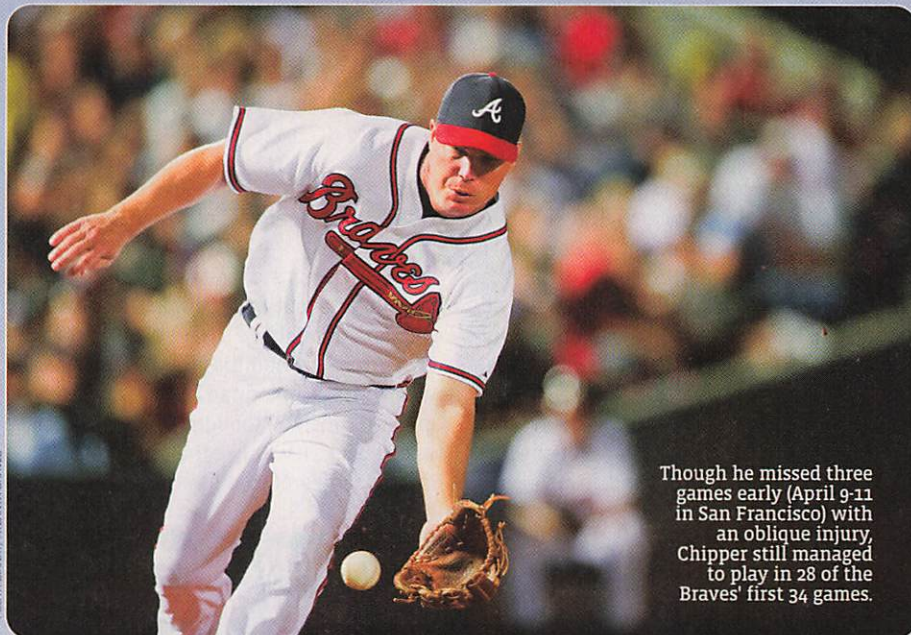


PHOTO: DAVID J. PHILLIPS

Though he missed three games early (April 9-11 in San Francisco) with an oblique injury, Chipper still managed to play in 28 of the Braves' first 34 games.

tations too high for a team that had a number of significant unknowns?

CHIPPER: I put high expectations on this club, but I think I had do-able goals on our club. We won 86 games last year. We struggled for pretty much the first half. I think this team is better than that team, therefore I feel this team could win 90 games. It's not a far-fetched goal. That being said, we have a long way to go. There has to be improvement in the lineup, my spot included, in defense. Our pitchers need to keep pitching the way they've been pitching and even better. Everyone needs to make adjustments, especially adjustments on the fly.

CT: Are there encouraging signs about the lineup?

CHIPPER: Martin Prado might be the most consistent player in the league, not to mention this team. All the guys who were struggling for the first two weeks of the season are starting to come around. Troy Glaus is starting to get into a rhythm, starting to put good at-bats together, draw walks, hit the ball hard, and more consistently.

CT: What about Jason Heyward? You've stood in those shoes - the next great marquee player. What's been your impression of him?

CHIPPER: How mature he's been through the whole thing. He's handled the

attention, the fame and success really well, a lot better than I did. He's incredibly mature, which is a testament to his mom and dad for raising him right. He's worked as hard as anybody and is reaping the benefits come 7:05 every night. He's prepared, patient, all the things that make the older guys proud, because we're so used to seeing the young guys come up trying to be Captain Caveman, wild, with no plan at the plate. The impressive thing is that he uses the whole field, and he uses the whole field with power. As someone who made their living hitting that way, you sit back and appreciate it. The home run he hit in yesterday's game (May 1) impressed me. He got back in

“NOW THAT WE'RE CYCLING THROUGH THE LEAGUE, I THINK YOU'LL SEE OUR OFFENSIVE NUMBERS CREEPING UP.”

the dugout, and I said to him, “Kid, that's how I used to hit them. That was awesome.”

CT: Matt Diaz commented that the media goes to you, win or lose. If you're in the lineup, they want to know how you're feeling. If you're out of the lineup, they want to know why. You're a lightning rod for the team. Do you ever wish someone else was here to deflect it?

CHIPPER: I realize the media has a job, and speaking to the media is part of my job. I would rather you guys talk to me than anybody else, because I want what happened in

the game or what was going on in my mind relayed in my words. I try to articulate to everyone out there what happened and what I was thinking. It's my responsibility as one of the leaders of this club to be a spokesman. I've learned some hard lessons through the media through the years, but I still respect that the story needs to go to the fans, and I'm okay with that.

CT: Have you felt yourself getting nostalgic at all this season - Bobby Cox's last year - all the tributes and “lasts”?

CHIPPER: Yeah. Bobby's the first thing that pops in my mind when it comes to Opening Day, when it comes to traveling to cities like San Francisco or St. Louis and knowing it's the last time he's going there. It gives you chill bumps every time they honor him. But then I sit back and think, “Hello, Dum-Dum! It could be your (last year), too.” And then it really is like a ball-peen hammer to the temple. It's one thing for it to be somebody else, but when you think you might not do this any more and this might be the last time you see that stadium, it gives you a shot of reality. Bobby is a source of inspiration for us when you're thinking, “I'm not feeling good.” You go out and play, because it's for Bobby. You have to give it all you've got for him, because he only gets one last season. We've been through a nine-game losing streak in the first 20 games of the season, but I've never seen him smile as much. He's as loose as ever, but a lot has to do with the guys that are in here. Bobby picks up on it. You should

have seen the look on his face when David Ross pulled the t-shirt with “153” (career ejections) and John Shulock throwing him out of a game on it. He got so tickled. I don't think I've ever seen him like that. It was good to see. When it comes to the game, Bobby's very intense, and it's nice to see him let his hair down. I've heard what he was like as a player. He played hard, and he doesn't expect anything less from his players. His big saying is, “If you're healthy, you should be out there playing.” And I agree. I'm sure he knew and played like he knew that you only have a few opportunities to affect the outcome of a game - four or five at-bats, a play or two in the field.

PAINTING THE CORNERS

BY JAY BUSBEE



HEYWARD AND THE CHOSEN FEW

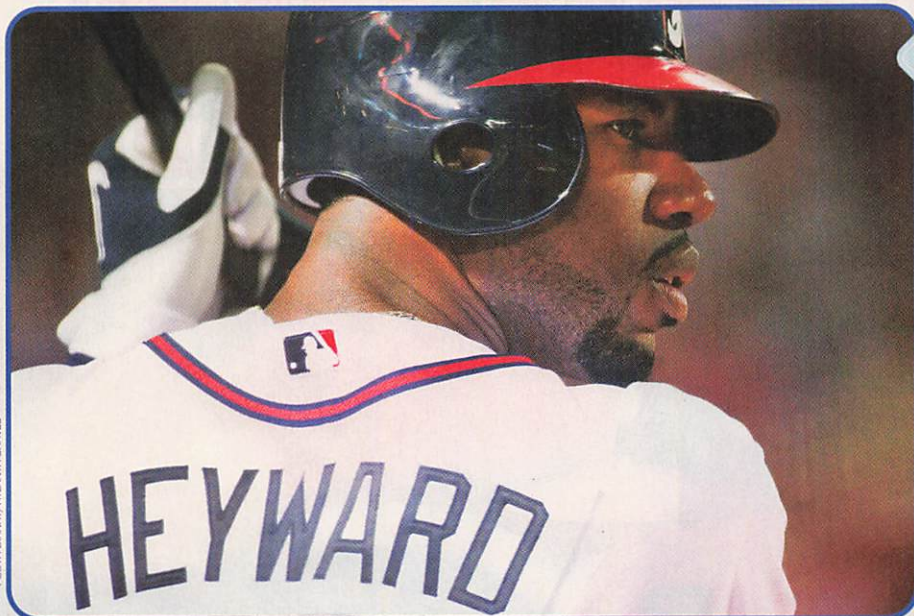


PHOTO: CHANAT / ATLANTA BRAVES

Heyward is showing every indication of belonging in the "sensation" category, but the big test is helping get the Braves back to the post-season.

WELL, THAT DIDN'T TAKE LONG. Before the first ball Jason Heyward hit in the major leagues even reached the Turner Field seats, fans and media alike were dubbing him the latest Atlanta homegrown sensation, the newest member of the Braves' most distinguished club.

Now, with a couple months' distance, we can start to answer the question: Is he a legit homegrown phenom, or are we all jumping the gun here?

The Braves have been turning out first-rate farm talent for decades, but only a select few rise to the level of "sensation." It's tough to define, but you know it when you see it.

Dale Murphy was the first in 1976, and he gave way to David Justice in 1989. Justice then anointed Chipper Jones in 1993, who in turn welcomed Jeff Francoeur into the club in 2005, calling him Atlanta's latest "golden boy." Andruw Jones arrived in a shower of World Series sparks in 1996, while Brian McCann slid in as an injury replacement in 2005.

Now comes Heyward, busting in with a dramatic debut unlike any before him. (Useless Braves trivia department: On the day Heyward was born, Aug. 9, 1989, Murphy hit two homers in a 6-3 Braves win over the Dodgers.)

So, what makes these particular Braves special? They're stars, yes, but they're something more. Plenty of stars have come

through Atlanta and made indelible marks, but never attained that hallowed "sensation" status. So what, then, is different about this crew?

They're Braves farm products. The Braves' farm system has been one of the franchise's hallmarks, and the ongoing parade of phenomenal ballplayers is Exhibit A.

Spot talent, sign talent, develop talent (Andruw - twice - and Heyward are both former Baseball America minor league players of the year) and finally, introduce talent to the world.

They swing the bat. Sorry, pitchers, but the "sensation" designation is reserved for position players alone. They're the ones we grow most attached to, through both day and night. So, with all due respect to Tom Glavine, Steve Avery, Tommy Hanson and other homegrown pitchers, the fact remains that the sensations swing a big stick. Sometimes, right from Day One.

They enter with a splash. Atlanta's sensations stepped up in the spotlight early in their careers. Murphy went 2-for-4 with two RBIs in his first game. Justice started slower, getting a hit in his first game but going 1-for-his-first-20. But both of those future stars were in awkward fielding positions - Murphy at catcher and Justice at first base - and once they moved to the outfield, their offensive numbers took off.

Chipper came up for a cup of coffee in

1993 and notched a single in his first plate appearance. Andruw had a hit and an RBI in his first game. (His '96 World Series heroics - homers in his first two at-bats - were two months away.) McCann? A single and an RBI in his first plate appearance. Still, none of those legends came close to the debuts of their descendants.

Francoeur, in what would turn out to be a microcosm of his Atlanta career, struck out twice and grounded out before launching a three-run homer for his first major league hit. Heyward saw that debut homer and raised, pounding a three-run shot in his very first plate appearance.

They're also "good kids." This one is both subjective and an overgeneralization. Obviously, you'd be hard pressed to find players in baseball history more respected and cleaner-cut than Dale Murphy. But most of the other sensations had that hometown-hero aspect about them, too.

Justice's confidence-bordering-on-arrogance was a necessary boost for a young team that thought it would be lucky to get to fifth place in the National League West. Chipper's professionalism set an example even for players several years his elder. Francoeur was the spark that gave the Braves the last division crown of their playoff run. McCann is the steady rock of the post-playoff generation.

And Heyward? Well, he's carrying nothing less than the dreams of an entire fan base that hopes and prays he'll be the guy to carry Bobby Cox to one last post-season visit.

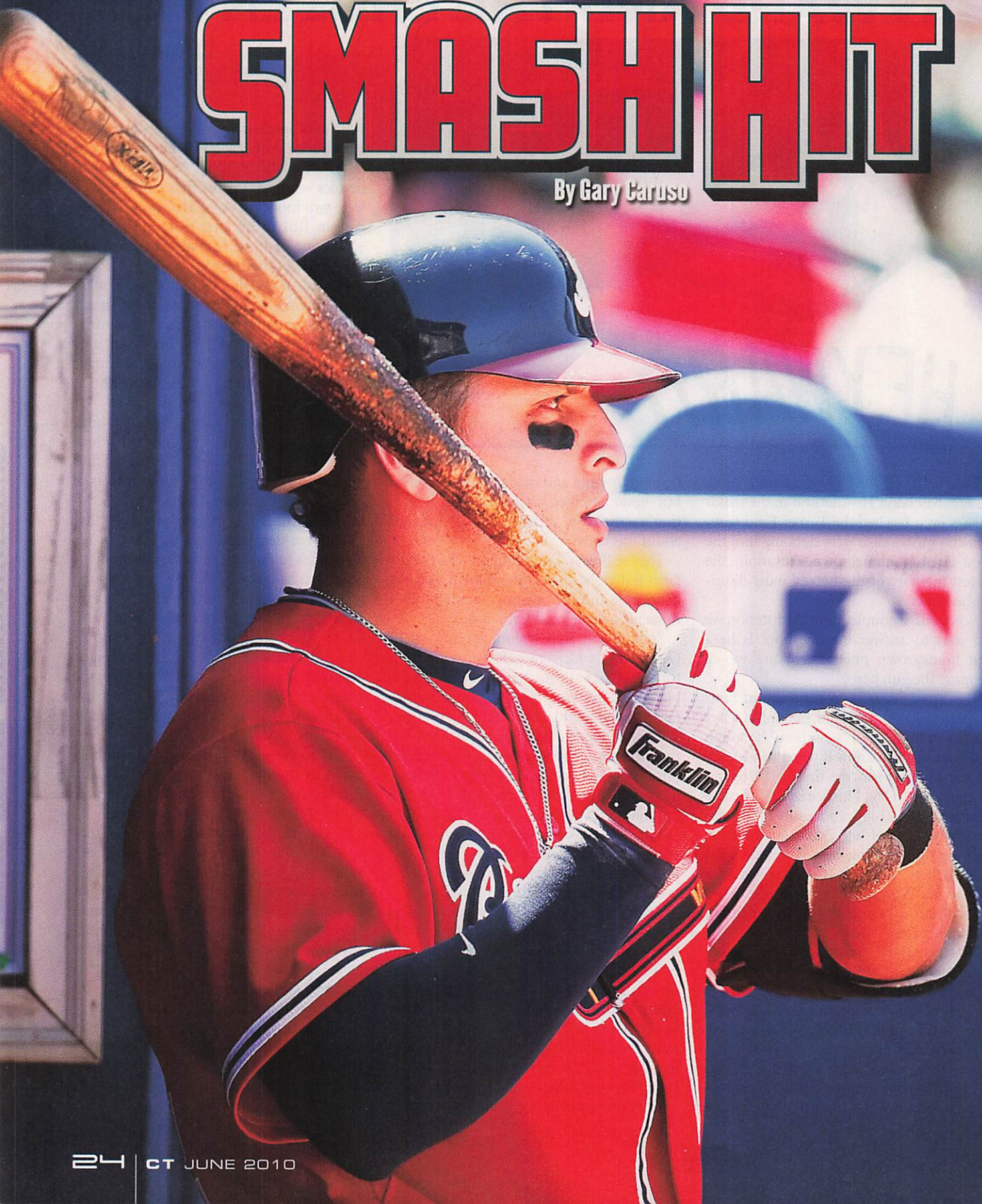
Certainly, the early "sensation" designation is no guarantee of future success. While Chipper is one of the best third basemen in history, Murphy's stellar early-'80s play hasn't been good enough to get him to Cooperstown. Justice was slowed by injury and expectations. Andruw's magic with the glove couldn't offset his trouble with the bat, and Francoeur couldn't live up to his early promise, at least not in Atlanta.

Succeed or fail, though, there's one thing that all the other sensations have done that Heyward hasn't - lead a team into October. Once he helps hang another flag on the Turner Field wall, he's in.

How The Intense Martin Prado
Became One Of The League's Best Hitters

SMASH HIT

By Gary Caruso





Martin Prado could have enjoyed a relaxing off-season, preparing for spring training with a regular conditioning program, knowing he'd proven himself in 2009 and that the regular job at second base was his.

But that's not the way Prado has ever approached anything. He's intense and demands more from himself than others expect. It's how he got in position to earn the second base job in the first place, so he wasn't about to relax when he knew he finally had it.

Prado went home to Venezuela after hitting .307 last year and being the acknowledged spark plug behind the Braves' second-half rally and ratcheted up his conditioning program several notches by tackling the demanding P90X (Power 90 Extreme) program.

"They [Braves management] told me I didn't have to worry, that I had the second base job," Prado said. "But I wanted to prepare. I wanted to be ready to go to spring training and not just be the second baseman, but show that I had worked hard. I wanted the team to feel good about me being there."

Prado left no doubt in anyone's mind that he was suited for the job by getting two hits on Opening Day and opening the season with five straight multi-hit games and a 14-game hitting streak, dating back to the last four games of 2009, that wasn't stopped until Colorado's Ubaldo Jimenez no-hit the Braves April 17.

Prado's torrid swinging continued through May 1, when he had his 10th multi-hit game of the season and was hitting a league-leading .368. His average came back to earth in early May (.312 through May 13), but not because he wasn't hitting the ball well, only because it wasn't falling.

The 6-foot-1 Prado entered the season a chiseled 206 pounds and in the best shape of his career.

"It's a long season. I wanted to be in the best possible shape," said Prado. "P90X combines power, strength, flexibility, a mix of everything. It made my workout program so much better. I lost 14 pounds. I saw what great shape Matt Diaz was in last year after doing it, but I didn't know that's how he did it. A friend told me about it. I wanted to quit after the first week... I tired it for two weeks and said, 'This is too hard!' But I kept doing it."

The results are impressing everyone on both sides of the field. In fact, when the Braves played three games in Philadelphia in early May, both hitting coaches - Milt Thompson of the Phillies and Terry

Pendleton - compared Prado to Bill Madlock, a four-time NL batting champion (1975-76 with the Cubs and 1981, '83 with Pittsburgh). Primarily a third baseman, Madlock hit .305 during his 15-year career yet never hit more than 19 home runs in a season.

"Prado reminds me of Bill Madlock," said Thompson, a second-round draft pick by the Braves in 1979 that played his first two big league seasons (1984-85) in Atlanta.

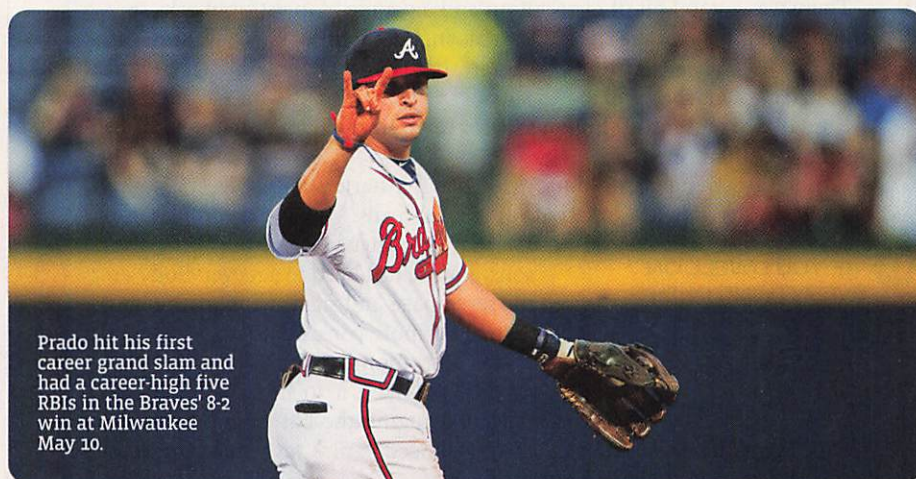
"That's a good comparison," said Pendleton, the 1991 NL batting champ and MVP with the Braves. "He had that short

played on. He's hit forever. This isn't out of the blue. I'm glad he's getting a shot to prove himself. He deserves everything."

Prado, who signed as a non-drafted free agent in 2001, hasn't won a batting title as a pro, but he's come close. In 2006, he hit .316 at Triple-A Richmond, which ranked second in the International League. He hit a combined .302 in his minor league career and had a .307 lifetime average in the majors entering this season.

"The plus to him is his hands," said Pendleton. "He's got great hands and uses them well. He has the confidence in his hands to stay back and see the ball as long as he possibly can before he reacts."

"When you find a guy like that, it's just tough to pitch to. You have to hope he gets himself out, by chasing a pitch or hitting the



Prado hit his first career grand slam and had a career-high five RBIs in the Braves' 8-2 win at Milwaukee May 10.

swing, and he used his hands big time. You weren't going to strike him out much. I can see that comparison. He's also like [Phillies infielder Placido] Polanco, same type of hitter (.303 career average). They're both going to put the ball in play and hit it out of the park if you screw up. Martin is that type of hitter."

Prado has never done anything except hit, so it should be no surprise to anyone that he's producing the way he is this year. It's just that he's never before had a regular job from Opening Day on a major league club like he has this year.

"Absolutely, I can see him winning a batting title - 100 percent," said Brian McCann. "He can handle any pitch, has a great eye, is patient, and never misses the barrel. When you put all those ingredients together, you're going to be very successful."

"I've known him since we came into the Braves organization together. I've seen him since he was 17 and he's always been one of the best players on all the teams he's

ball at somebody. Lately, he's been hitting it hard right at people. It's baseball. He knows it's going to turn around if he keeps hitting the ball hard."

"The first time I saw the kid, I said, 'This kid can hit. If he's not hitting now, he will.' Then I heard he was a hit or two away from winning the Triple-A hitting crown (2006). He's continued to hit and has gotten even better. It won't surprise me at all if he wins a batting title someday. He's the kind of hitter that can do that, but it can be a fine line. He needs to get the breaks, too."

Even the Phillies' Thompson sees better things in the future for Prado.

"He had a great year last year and proved to be a solid major league hitter," said the former Braves outfielder. "He works gap to gap, and good things happen when you do that. He has a short stroke and is very disciplined. You don't see him swinging at a lot of

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE



I PLAN TO STICK WITH GLASSES AT ALL TIMES

I KNEW THERE WAS A CHANCE that at nighttime there would be issues with the sight in my right eye. During spring training I was fine, but I played games in the daylight. Once we were playing at night, I noticed something wasn't right.

It was only at nighttime. During the day, I didn't have any trouble seeing. I tried contacts, I tried eye drops, I tried everything except glasses. It was incredibly frustrating.

Finally, I tried the glasses, and they made me feel the most comfortable. I'm going to stick with wearing them at all times. I don't think I'll have any surgical correction any time in the near future.

You're going to go through ups and downs through the course of the season. That's why when you do win, when you make it to the playoffs or the World Series, you appreciate it that much more.

There was a good bit of expectation and a couple of question marks surrounding our team at the start of the season. I don't think fans have seen the "real Braves." We got off to a good start, had a good couple of weeks, and then had a tough road trip.

Kind of obvious, but I think it's better to go through a tough bit early, in April rather than August.

I think our strength is in our pitching staff - starters and relievers. We've got some great arms. We have a good lineup,

too. We have guys who have had big seasons, and we just need to get everybody on the same page and start swinging the bats better and more consistently.

My first month wasn't as good as I would have liked it to be. I feel like I've struggled swinging the bat all month long,

felt like I couldn't get comfortable. I know I need to pick my game up. I need to be a presence in the middle of the lineup.

I am trying to get better and better on the defensive side. I'm getting better each year, but it's a work in progress. It's something I'll be working on my whole career.

Some aspects of the game are difficult to work on without being in a game setting, but the defensive side of catching isn't one of those. You can definitely work at getting better, and I know I'm better now than when I first broke in.

Staying loose on this team isn't really an issue. We have a lot of guys who have been around the league for a long time. And guys like Tommy Hanson and Jason Heyward have so much talent. We're going to be fine. They just go out and play baseball. There's nothing you need to say to them.

In terms of being a leader, if I thought someone was pressing and trying to do too much, I'd say something, but I don't see that happening. Everyone is playing hard.

Situations like mental lapses are addressed in the clubhouse, and that's the way we handle that sort of thing. When those things happen, the player usually knows better than anyone what he did wrong.

I had a play when I didn't know the rule for the infield fly. I've been playing baseball my whole life, and to not know that rule was absolutely embarrassing. I hope people don't think that was a lazy play. I had never seen that before, and it was a close game and they scored on it.

You feel like you've let your team down. All you can do is forget it and move on. If you dwell on everything in this game that goes wrong, you'll be a miserable person.

bad pitches. When you have a good eye and you're not trying to pull the ball all the time, and just trying to work the whole field, that's when you're successful."

Make no mistake, Prado is a hitter, but he's much more than that. He's become an excellent infielder, and perhaps above all, he is driven. He loves to play, and he comes to pay hard every day and he's a consummate teammate.

"He's a baseball player," said Bobby Cox, perhaps giving his highest compliment. "He loves the game. He's been a .300 hitter everywhere he's been. It's no surprise with the way he hit last year and the way he's hit this year. And he's been brilliant at second base, I mean brilliant. This guy can play the outfield, too. He can play second, short, third, first. He's one of the most valuable guys you can have."

"Kelly Johnson struggled for a little bit last year, and I stuck Martin in there. He got two or three hits, and I said, 'I have to play him again.' Then he got some more hits, and made plays. The hardest thing was telling Kelly that this guy won the job and I couldn't take him out. He's earned everything he's gotten. I can't say enough about him. He's a dream for a manager."

The Braves were a different team once Prado took over the regular job at second base last year in late June. En route to career highs in hits (138), games (128), runs (64), home runs (11) and RBIs (49), he led the team into playoff contention right up to the last week of the season. He was the NL Player of the Week for June 29-July 5 when he hit .577, and his 11 doubles in September tied for second on the majors.

"Until you see him play every day, you never know what you have," said Cox. "He got a chance last year and took it by the horns."

"The minute he got his opportunity to play every day, he never looked back," said McCann. "Everybody loves him around here. He's a tough out and plays great defense."

Nevertheless, Prado isn't taking anything for granted now, just like he didn't in the off-season.

"I like the way I'm feeling now, but there's a long way to go," said Prado. "I want people to say, 'That guy has established himself.' I'm not there yet."

"My mother (Irma) always tells me, 'Son, you can't control that. All you can control is play hard and give your best.' I always remember that."

And it shows.

- Ken Mandel contributed reporting to this story.

IF YOU DWELL ON EVERYTHING IN THIS GAME THAT GOES WRONG, YOU'LL BE A MISERABLE PERSON.

PRADO SPECIALIZES IN DOUBLES

BY STEVE FALL

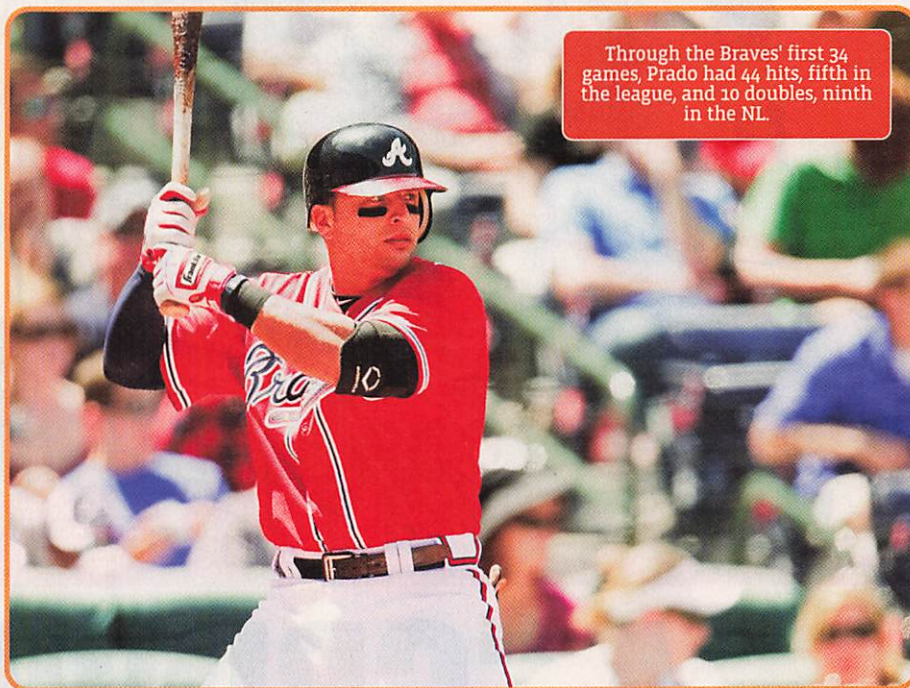
MARTIN PRADO jumped out to a hot start with the bat, hitting .354 through May 2. While keeping his average that high all season will be a challenge, Prado has always been an excellent hitter. His .317 batting average since the start of 2008 ranks eighth in the majors (minimum 800 plate appearances). He trails only Joe Mauer (.346), Albert Pujols (.341), Pablo Sandoval (.334), Ichiro Suzuki (.330), Hanley Ramirez (.321), Manny Ramirez (.320) and Derek Jeter (.319).

Prado's .312 career batting average leads all second basemen with at least 800 plate appearances through their age-26 season since 1950. He held a narrow lead over Hall of Famer Rod Carew (.309), and two active players in Dustin Pedroia (.307) and Robinson Cano (.306). Prado also ranks sixth in on-base plus slugging percentage (.819). His figure placed him behind Chase Utley (.846), former Brave Marcus Giles (.834), Ian Kinsler (.832), Pedroia (.828) and Jose Vidro (.823).

Most of the players Prado joined in those rankings had far more career plate appearances than the Atlanta second baseman (.980). His numbers look even more impressive when matched against players who received similar playing time. Among second basemen with between 800 and 1,200 plate appearances through age 26 since 1950, Prado again ranks first in batting average (.312). This time he has a huge edge over the next closest players: Alberto Callaspo (.286) and Cookie Rojas (.286). In OPS, Prado's .819 figure trailed only Utley (.846), and there was a wide gap before the third-place Callaspo (.746).

While Prado has limited home run power, he hits doubles with great frequency. In fact, he had doubled more often per plate appearance than any other player in Atlanta Braves history (minimum: 800 plate appearances). Prado averaged a double once every 14.2 plate appearances. Johnny Estrada (15.1) came next, followed by Brian McCann (15.4) and Adam LaRoche (15.9).

When it comes to hitting statistics, walks get relatively little attention. However, they can have a major impact on a team's run production and won-lost record.



Through the Braves' first 34 games, Prado had 44 hits, fifth in the league, and 10 doubles, ninth in the NL.

The Braves led the National League with 115 walks through May 2. That put them on track to draw 745 free passes over the full schedule. Reaching that figure seems unlikely, since no NL club has ever had that many walks in one season, and just five AL teams have done so since 1950.

The Braves could fall well off their early pace and still break the franchise record for walks in a season. The 1949 Boston Braves hold that mark with 684. Only two other teams in franchise history managed as many as 625 walks - the pennant-winning 1948 Boston Braves (667) and the fifth-place 1987 Atlanta club (641).

Chipper Jones led the team in walks this year (18) - as he has nearly every season - but several teammates had impressive figures, as well. Brian McCann had 17 walks, Jason Heyward came next with 14, and each of the other five regulars had at least nine.

While Heyward's selectivity at the plate has helped the Braves improve in this area, the team also showed good plate discipline in both 2008 and 2009. In 2008, their 618 walks placed third in the NL. They drew the league's fifth-highest total last season (602).

Despite all their success while winning 14 straight division titles, the Braves never had an extremely high walk total during

that amazing run. Atlanta is one of just four NL clubs that has not drawn 625 walks in a season at least once since 1990, joining the Reds, Pirates and the Nationals/Expos. The 1995 World Championship Braves did place second in the NL with 520 walks during a strike-shortened 144-game season.

High walk totals certainly don't guarantee playoff spots, but they improve a team's chances. Among the 41 teams to walk at least 625 times in a season since 2000, 25 made the post-season (61 percent). The Yankees (663), Rockies (660), Red Sox (659) and Rays (642) reached this level in 2009. The first three teams made the playoffs, and Tampa Bay won 84 games in the AL East, baseball's toughest division. All three clubs to walk 625 times in 2008 - Red Sox (646), Cubs (636) and Rays (626) - qualified for the post-season.

Of course, it takes much more than walks to build a playoff-caliber attack. The Braves placed just 10th in on-base percentage (.335) at this writing, because they had the league's 13th-ranked batting average (.238). The Braves also tied for 14th with 16 home runs. Those numbers led to the league's third-lowest runs scored total (102). If they can improve in these other key areas, the walks could have a big impact on their success.

PHOTO: DANNY/ATLANTA BRAVES



Bobby Cox is greeted at home plate after hitting the first of his nine career home runs (L) in 1968 for the Yankees.



A "GRINDER"

Bobby Cox's Playing Career Was Short, But No One Ever Questioned His Effort

BY PATTY RASMUSSEN

SOMETIME AFTER APRIL 14, 1968, the date of Bobby Cox's major league debut with the New York Yankees, he put his thoughts about that landmark moment in his life on paper, writing a five-page letter to his long-time friends Jerry Lund and his wife, Bonnie.

"I still have that letter," said Bonnie from Selma, Calif., where Cox was raised. "Someday when Bobby goes into the Hall of Fame, I'm going to give them the letter."

Though she declined to share it, Bonnie said the letter is filled with Cox's description of the excitement of stepping onto the field at Yankee Stadium as a major league player. Naturally, Cox, 69, remembers it to this day.

"My legs felt weak when they announced my name," he said.

The 26-year-old rookie had finally made it to the bigs on the grandest stage in baseball.

"It was great," he said. "It was my first shot."

His was an inauspicious beginning. The Yankees were losing to the Minnesota Twins, 4-0, in the bottom of the ninth when a rally started. By the time Cox entered the game as a pinch-hitter, the Yankees had scored three runs, and with one out and two men on base, Cox had the chance to drive in the tying and winning runs. Al Worthington was the Minnesota pitcher, and he promptly struck out Cox. The next batter, Ruben Amaro, grounded out to

end the game.

Despite the disappointment of the loss, Cox was still on the major league club. And he played there as he played his entire career - hard. Cox once nicknamed Braves second baseman Mark Lemke, "Dirt," short for "dirt player." According to those who knew Cox as a player, that's exactly the way he played the game.

Though not one to brag, Cox said, "I would definitely have wanted to manage a player like me. I played hard. I worked hard at the game."

His Yankees teammate, pitcher Al Downing, remembers Cox as a "grinder."

"He went out there and played hard every day," said Downing. "One of the things we appreciated about him the most was that he was very fundamentally sound as a ballplayer. There were plenty of guys out there who could play baseball but didn't have sound fundamentals. Not Bobby. He was a super athlete and a fundamental ballplayer."

Cox's knowledge of the fundamentals went back to his formative years in Selma, where he learned the game from his father, J.T., and his uncles, Junior and Grover. He was also coached in junior and senior high school by Allen Cropsey at Selma High School and by Pete Beiden, a highly regarded college coach in Fresno who invited Cox to work out with other premier players in

FIFTH IN A SERIES

#6 THE FINAL SEASON

the area. His skills were sound, but it was his determination and work ethic that caught the eye of Red Adams, the scout who signed him to a contract with the Los Angeles Dodgers.

"In 1971, I was pitching for the Dodgers," said Downing, "and Red Adams was my pitching coach. He told me, 'I signed Bobby Cox right out of high school. He was the same determined, dedicated player at age 18 that he was in the majors. He's a player that got the maximum out of the ability he had.'"

Cox, who received a hefty \$40,000 bonus, went to his first spring training in 1960 with the Dodgers at their facility in Vero Beach, Fla. It was just the second time he was on an airplane, a prop plane flying from California to Florida. Though it was a different environment than he was used to, Cox lived in the Dodgertown barracks with players older than he was. He put his head down and got to work.

"I honestly don't remember much from those days," he said. "I was thinking about getting to the big leagues, and I didn't really care what they needed me to do or where they wanted me to play."

His friend, Jerry Lund, remembers the time when Cox played in the Venezuelan leagues and was hit in the mouth by a ball

but didn't want to get out of the lineup. Lund said that Cox was already playing in pain when he was in the minor leagues.

"He didn't want to tell anyone," Lund added. "He probably played hurt for most of his playing career."

Cox started his career playing for the Reno Silver Sox, the Dodgers' Class-C team, equivalent to today's advanced Class-A level, where he hit .255 with 13 home runs and 75 RBIs in 125 games.

"Not many off that team made it," said Cox, hard pressed to name even one.

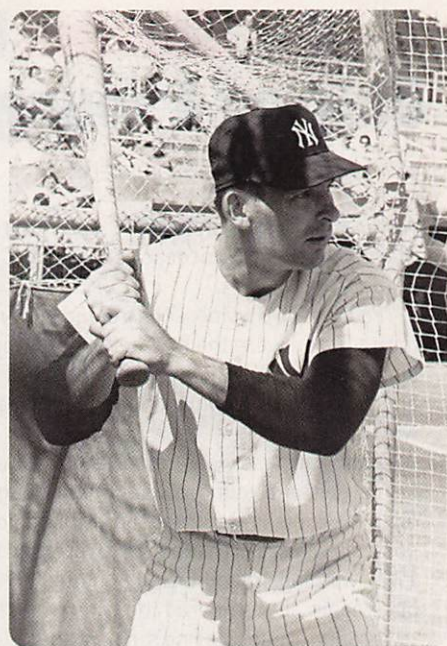
They played a lot of games in the California League, which was close to home for Cox. By 1963-1964, Cox was playing for the Double-A Albuquerque Dodgers, and had a reputation that preceded him.

"I knew him from across the field," said Bobby Dews, Cox's friend and a long-time Braves coach. "I played against him when I played in the Texas League at Tulsa."

Dews remembered Cox playing second base at the time.

"He was known as a hard-nosed, tough ballplayer," said Dews. "Really tough... you didn't mess with him. There were a lot of guys like that, that were tough, but he stuck out. He was tough but clean, fair. That's the way I saw him across the field."

Cox hit .291 with 16 home runs and 91



Cox, taking batting practice at Yankee Stadium, was the third baseman on the 1968 Topps Rookie All-Star Team but bad knees soon cut short his playing career.

RBIs in 138 games in 1964 for Albuquerque, and in November 1964, he was taken by the Chicago Cubs in the minor league draft and spent 1965 at Triple-A Salt Lake City of the Pacific Coast League, hitting .264 with 12 and 55 RBIs in 136 games.

In April 1966, he was traded to the Atlanta Braves, with cash, for outfielder Billy Cowan. In 1967, Cox played at Triple-A Richmond on a team that was managed by Luman Harris and included future major leaguers Jim Beauchamp, who became one of Cox's lifelong friends, Felix Millan, Tommie Aaron (Hank's brother), Mike Lum, Mike Page and Ron Reed.

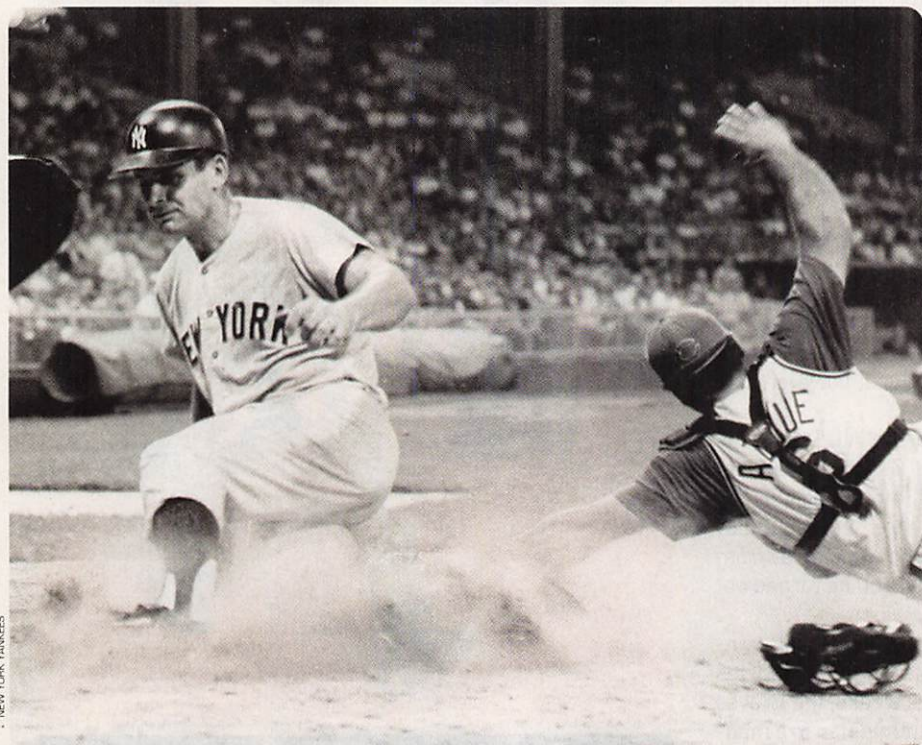
"That team did real well," said Cox. "We came in first place."

Cox did his part, hitting .297 in 99 games, with 14 home runs and 51 runs batted in.

That off-season, December 7, 1967, Cox was traded to the Yankees (for lefty Dale Roberts and catcher Bob Tillman), and by the end of spring training 1968, he beat out Mike Ferraro, a spring training rookie, for the third base job.

"I guess [New York manager] Ralph Houk gave me the word," said Cox. "I don't have any memory of it! I know I called my parents and told them I'd be playing in Yankee Stadium."

The Yankees were a team in transition at the time. Houk, who would become Cox's



Cox was a fundamentally sound ballplayer that wasn't afraid to get his uniform dirty even though his big league playing career lasted only two seasons with the Yankees.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 31

Glavine Recalls Cox's Steady Hand Guiding A Young Team From Worst To First In 1991

BY PATTY RASMUSSEN

ASK 305-GAME WINNER and future Hall of Famer Tom Glavine one word to describe Bobby Cox, and his answer is immediate.

"Fair," said Glavine. "He treated everyone the same. It didn't matter if you were the number-one guy on the team or the number-25 guy on the team, Bobby cheered for everyone the same and knew that every guy on the team was needed in order to win ballgames."

Cox's "fairness" was important to Glavine early in his career as a young, sometimes struggling, pitcher. In 1988, his first full season in the majors, Glavine posted a woeful 7-17 record. He reversed the trend in 1989, winning 14 and losing 8, but in 1990, the losses once again outnumbered the wins when he went 10-12.

Through it all, Glavine's poise and talent shone through. The organization knew they had a jewel in him, and change was coming. Cox, who had served as general manager since 1986, took on the dual role of GM and field manager on June 22, 1990, when Russ Nixon was fired.

"To his credit, [Cox] was very even keeled," recalled Glavine. "That meant a lot to me as a young pitcher on a bad team. This was a team that lost a lot of games (97). But they were very committed to us. There was no question that I would be pitching every five days. I was expected to go out there and get guys out."

That Cox was committed to his players was no surprise. He drafted many of them and had closely monitored their progress. And his leadership in 1990 helped keep the team loose.

"Obviously, everyone is more fun to be around when you're winning, including Bobby," recalled Glavine. "He joked around more when we were winning, but it wasn't like he was adding to the tension when we lost. He was always adamant that those things (losing streaks) happen and that we shouldn't panic."

The steadying influence Cox maintained over his 1990 club spilled over into 1991 and the beginning of the Braves' remarkable 14-year run as they won division title after division title. The team started strong and enjoyed a magical month of May when they stunned observers by going 17-9. They moved into second place in the division, and Glavine was named National League Pitcher of the Month with a 6-0 record and a 1.76 ERA. June, however, was another story.

"I remember in the weeks leading up to the All-Star break (July 8-10), we didn't play well at all," said Glavine. "We went from like three games back to seven or more back. (They dropped into third place, 9 1/2 games back). I remember Bobby saying, 'We're in this thing. We're just one good week away from getting back in this thing.' It was typical Bobby, and he turned out to be right."

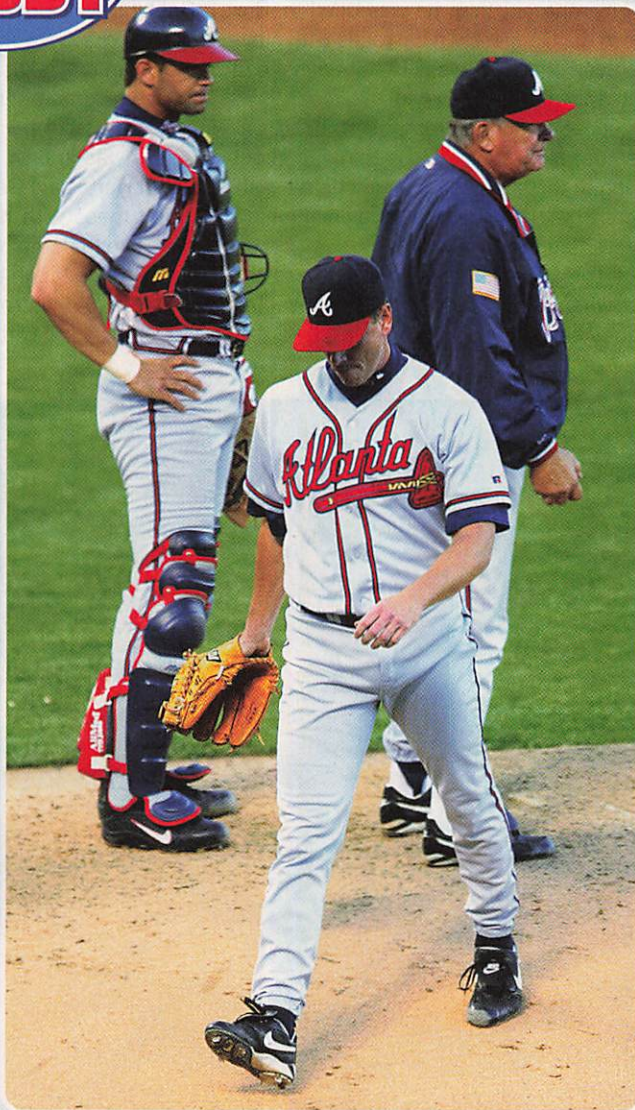
The team charged out of the gate after the All-Star break, winning nine of 11 games, while their nemesis, the Los Angeles Dodgers, did the reverse. Within less than two weeks, the Braves were but 2 1/2 games back, and the race that culminated in a magical "Worst to First" story was on.

Glavine described that season as one of the best times of his career with Cox, not because of his personal success - starting

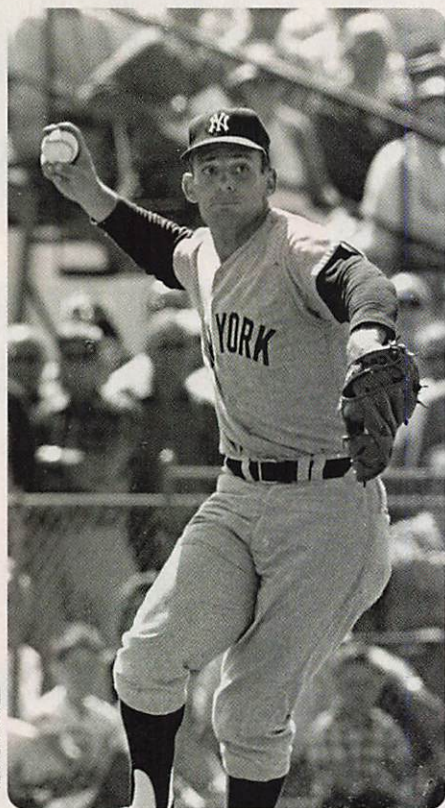
pitcher for the National League in the All-Star game, finishing the season with a 20-11 record and earning his first Cy Young Award - but for the man that believed in the team and put the pieces together.

"It was incredibly gratifying to be part of the turnaround and especially to be a part of that for Bobby," he said. "As a GM, he had drafted a lot of those players, developed them, and then managed them. He played a part in every aspect of the development of that team, so it was great to be part of the team that fulfilled his master plan."

STORIES OF BOBBY



Though Glavine was a star pitcher for Cox, he says the manager treated everyone on the team the same, right down to the 25th man on the roster.



NEW YORK YANKEES

Cox and Mickey Mantle were linked for more than 40 years for helping turn the Yankees' last triple play until this April 22.

greatest managerial influence, was in his second stint managing the Yankees. Mickey Mantle was playing first base instead of patrolling the outfield and was still the biggest name on the roster. Downing said not everyone was pleased that the Yankees had traded two of their players, Roberts and Tillman, for Cox.

"In those years with the Yankees, we were bringing in a lot of players from outside the organization," said Downing. "It was disheartening for some of us players, because we thought there were good players in the minor leagues."

Cox changed Downing's mind.

"He played hard. All the time," said Downing, an excellent pitcher who later gained the distinction with the Dodgers of throwing the pitch that Hank Aaron hit for his 715th home run, breaking Babe Ruth's record. "No matter how he was feeling, he knew, if you're healthy you're out there. People seem to mention his (injured) knees, but I remember his shoulder. He'd dive for a ball and his shoulder would pop out. The trainer would run back on the field to pop his shoulder back in."

Cox also made an impression on Marty

Appel, a 19-year-old who had been hired to answer fan mail for Mantle. By 1973, Appel was the director of public relations for the Yankees, but in 1968, he was as much a rookie as Cox was.

"They were an easy bunch of people to know," said Appel. "They weren't superstars. There weren't big egos."

And Appel noticed something special about Cox.

"He was very mature," he said. "You could almost see a manager in progress. He had a good grasp of the game. As a player, he didn't have a lot of speed, but he played the game hard. It became apparent that he wouldn't have a 20-year playing career."

Appel laughed as he told a story about Cox, who had been asked to sign several dozen baseballs one day.

"Cox came in, a little grouchy, which was unusual for him," recalled Appel. "He was complaining about having to sign the baseballs. But he was saying that while signing 'Bob Cox' - six letters - and right across from him signing baseballs was (pitcher) Bill Monbouquette, not saying a word! It was funny and stuck with me."

"What's also funny," he continued, "is that when you look at the 1968 Yankees team, there were two Hall of Famers on it, but who would have thought it would be Mickey Mantle and Bobby Cox!"

Mantle and Cox were also linked by a piece of Yankees history that occurred on June 3, 1968. In the top of the eighth inning, with the bases loaded, Minnesota Twins catcher Johnny Roseboro hit a line drive back to the pitcher, Dooley Womack, who caught it and fired the ball to Cox at third, for the second out. Cox then threw to Mantle at first for the third out. It was a rare triple play that stood as the last Yankees triple play until this April 22.

Cox hit .229 with seven home runs and 41 RBIs in 135 games and made the Topps Rookie All-Star team in 1968, but Appel was right about Cox's playing career. It was short. His body betrayed him, and the next year, he played in just 85 games, losing the everyday third baseman's job to his friend and road roommate, Bobby Murcer.

Cox made his last major league appearance on Oct. 1, 1969. The next two seasons, he spent playing in Triple-A Syracuse and Class-A Ft. Lauderdale, but his knees couldn't take the abuse. He retired from playing after the 1971 season, but he wasn't finished with baseball...

Not by a long shot.

NEXT MONTH: PART SIX.



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* Learn More About Steve Penley And His Work At: stevepenley.com.



A close-up photograph of an older man, likely a coach or manager, wearing a white baseball jersey with red and blue trim. The jersey features a large red 'A' logo with a yellow and red design inside. The man is looking down and slightly to the side.

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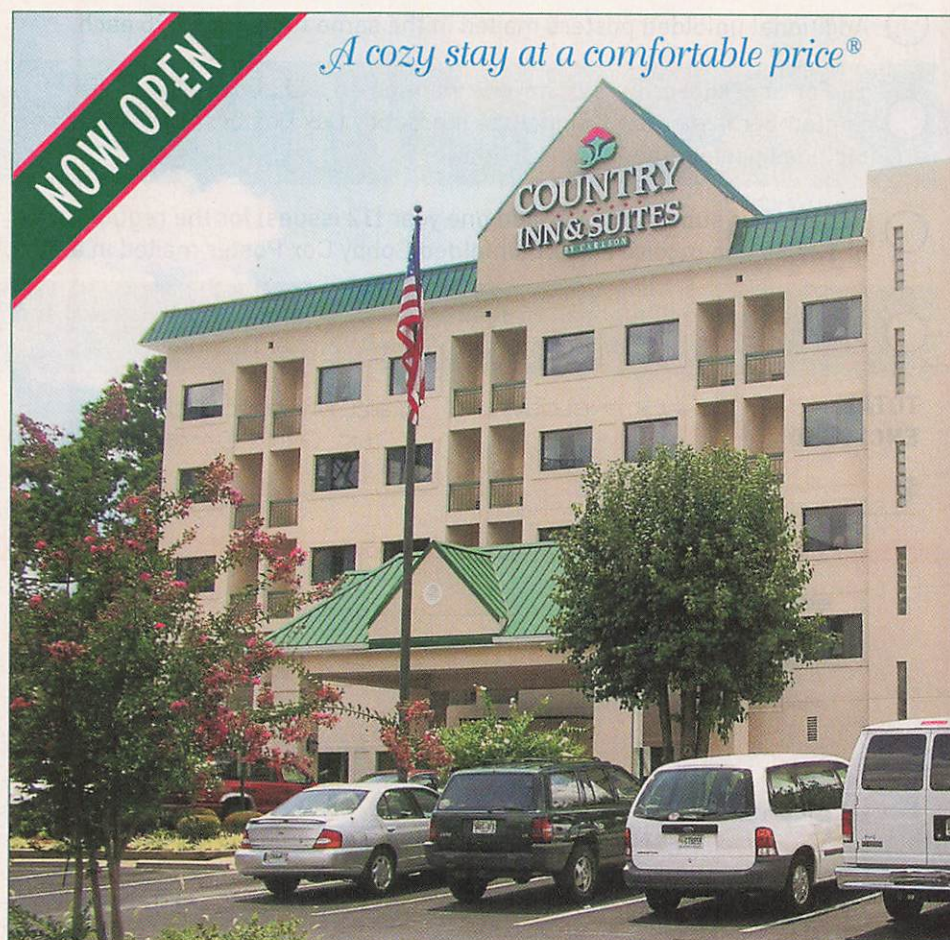
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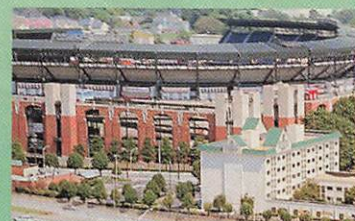
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Before Fans Realize

He's Been In The Game

By Melanie D.J. Kaplan

WHEN ERIC O'FLAHERTY ARRIVED at spring training this year, it was impossible for those in the clubhouse to ignore the reliever that is easy to miss during his short spurts on the mound.

"He looked like a different person coming into spring training," Frank Wren said. "I would best characterize him as average shape before, but there's a big difference between that and showing up in tip-top shape. He showed up in tip-top shape."

The lefty's teammates agree with Wren. Although that distinction is something to be proud of in any clubhouse, O'Flaherty didn't set out last winter to win a six-pack award. After spending much of the previous winter recovering from a back injury, he took the time during this off-season to focus on exercise and diet. Lots of time in the weight room, plenty of stretching and plyometrics. No pizza. No ice cream. Just fruits and vegetables and lean meats with no sauce.

And it's paid off.

O'Flaherty's tip-top condition this year and his killer left arm have him ranked among the league leaders in appearances (16, one behind Peter Moylan for the team lead).

"I decided if I'm going to be an athlete," O'Flaherty said, "I should take care of myself."

Just like many boys growing up in Walla Walla, in southeastern Washington, O'Flaherty wanted to be a professional athlete. Very little in his life didn't revolve around sports - his activities, his friends, even his video games.



"He had a little more energy than other kids," said his father, Bill O'Flaherty, a former second-string high school quarterback. "So, on Sunday mornings, after he played in Little League or Babe Ruth leagues during the week, we'd go to a lot across the street and just throw the ball."

The son of a letter-carrier and a nurse, O'Flaherty is the third of four children. He says his older sister was the academic, his older brother was the musician, and his younger brother, Andy, was "an exact replica of me" - all sports, all the time.

Bill and Georgia O'Flaherty both went to Whitman College in Walla Walla, and they moved into a house two blocks from the school, where they still live today.

Walla Walla High School's pitching coach, Keith Gradwohl, first met O'Flaherty during his sophomore year.

"One of our JV coaches said, 'His ball is like a snake,' and that's what I remembered about him," said Gradwohl, who became the head baseball coach this year. "He impressed me right from the get-go."

Those nasty, snake-like-moving pitches were fine-tuned in O'Flaherty's high school years, when he was a starting pitcher. Gradwohl, who was drafted by the Cardinals in 1976 (but chose to play at Boise State instead), worked with him on a strategy that the young pitcher would always remember.

"He wanted to strike everyone out,"

Gradwohl said. "I told him, 'You need to try to get people to hit the ball on the ground, instead of trying to strike them all out.'"

In the June 2003 draft, O'Flaherty was selected by the Mariners in the sixth round, so three days out of high school, Walla Walla's pitcher-of-the-year found himself more than a thousand miles from home, at Seattle's spring training and player development center in Peoria, Ariz. He was 18 and admittedly immature, but he was quick to put his high school lessons to use. Later that year, he sent an e-mail message to Gradwohl. The subject was, "The three-pitch inning."

Gradwohl was delighted.

"He realized," Gradwohl said, "you have to get them to hit the ball."

Everyone back home in Walla Walla, about four hours from Seattle, was thrilled to have O'Flaherty sign with the home team. But twice in five years (2004 and '08), O'Flaherty ended up on the disabled list from mid-June through the end of the season, due to lower back strains.

After the first injury, Seattle decided that being a reliever would put less pressure on O'Flaherty's back, so from then on, he was working out of the bullpen as a specialist. That meant he would enter the game between the sixth and eighth innings, for an average of one inning, but sometimes to face just one left-handed hitter.

At one point, O'Flaherty's childhood friend, Zach Armiyo, came to see a Mariners game against the Reds.

"[Ken] Griffey had hit two home runs," he said. "We saw Eric warming up, and we went down to watch him. He came out and struck Griffey out on three straight pitches. I know

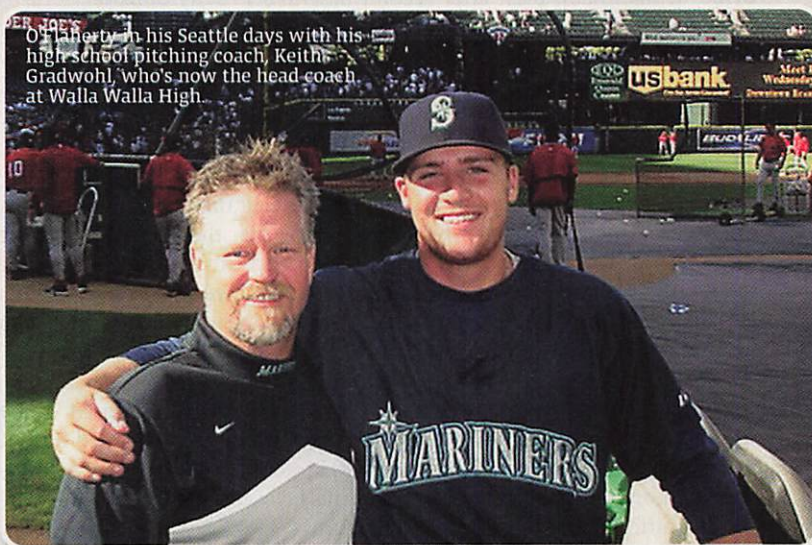
Griffey was a huge idol for him. To strike out the guy you grew up cheering for - a future Hall of Famer - it was a pretty cool thing."

O'Flaherty ranked first among Seattle relievers in wins in 2007 (7-1), appearing in 56 games. But still, after his '08 injury that limited him to seven appearances, the club decided to take him off its roster at the end of the season - a move that would prove regrettable for the Mariners but fortuitous for the Braves.

"In the '07 season, we had really good reports on him and thought he was one of the better lefthanders coming along," Wren said. "After his back troubles in '08, the Mariners tried to send him through waivers [when a player is available to be picked up by any other team]. A couple of our guys - [special assistants] Dick Balderson and Jim Fregosi - really liked him. Once we saw his name on the waivers, we thought we should take the chance."

It was a gamble that paid off. Although it took O'Flaherty longer to rehabilitate his back that winter than he expected, he was back where he wanted to be by the end of spring training in Orlando and was excited for a fresh start in Atlanta.

He went on to appear in 78 games during the 2009 season (ninth in the majors and second for Atlanta - to Moylan) and retired 58 of the 78 first batters he faced. This season, through mid-May,



O'Flaherty in his Seattle days with his high school pitching coach, Keith Gradwohl, who's now the head coach at Walla Walla High.

O'Flaherty is working at a similar pace and has the fifth lowest ERA (2.51) on the team.

With an easy smile and quiet demeanor, O'Flaherty is well-liked in the clubhouse. He is quick to laugh and is laid back - so much so that Moylan insists if it weren't for him being O'Flaherty's personal alarm clock, he'd never make it to the bullpen or bus on time.

Moylan says he didn't know about O'Flaherty before the Braves acquired him, but seeing him in action makes him question what the Seattle front office was thinking by letting him go.

"It's like night and day," Moylan said. "The tools are there, and his work ethic is better than any guy I've seen. He works harder in one day than most guys work in a week."

Other players echo Moylan's assessment of O'Flaherty's work ethic. When it comes to training and eating, he doesn't mess around. Before games, he can be found doing a cardiovascular

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE



BY KEN ROSENTHAL

INJURIES AND TURNOVER ARE CHALLENGING PHILS

THE PHILLIES aren't simply facing an uphill fight because of their injuries. As of May 1, 10 of their 25 players - 40 percent - were not with the club last season, and manager **Charlie Manuel** says the team needs more time to gel. "It took us about two years to develop an attitude," Manuel said. With the exception of third baseman **Placido Polanco**, who also was with the team from 2003 to '05, the newcomers need to learn the Phillies' Way.

Diamondbacks and former Braves second baseman **Kelly Johnson** says he spent seemingly the entire winter in the batting cage, focusing on hitting to all fields. "I don't try to pull anything in batting practice," Johnson said. "I try to go from the right-center-field gap over to the left-field line. I saw (former teammate) **Chipper** (Jones) do that for years. It never really made sense to me. I never quite understood it. It just helps you stay on the ball (longer)."

Giants manager **Bruce Bochy** is serious about keeping infielder **Juan Uribe** in his lineup even after second baseman **Freddy Sanchez** returns from surgery on his left shoulder. "He's a 'money' player," Bochy said of Uribe. "Look what he did for the White Sox in the (2005) World Series, how it ended with that tough play. He's a better hitter now than he's ever been, more disciplined - the type of hitter we need, someone who can do some damage."

Scouts generally disparage Diamondbacks righthander **Ian Kennedy**, but at least one has changed his opinion now that the Kennedy is in the more pitcher-friendly National League. "I respect the way he pitches," the scout said. "He knows what he's doing. He's a guy I wouldn't mind having. He's 88 to 90 (mph), and he attacks with his fastball, which is what you want to do."

The two most impressive things about Padres righthander **Luke Gregerson** are his pitch efficiency and dominance of right-handed hitters. In early May, Gregerson was averaging 13.2 pitches per inning, the second-fewest among NL relievers behind Cardinals closer **Ryan Franklin**. Right-handed hitters started 3-for-36 against him.

As the Nationals await the arrival of righthander **Stephen Strasburg** and the return of righty **Chien-Ming Wang**, lefthander **Scott Olsen** again looks like a quality starter. "He's back to where he was," one scout said, recalling Olsen's early years with the Marlins. "Very aggressive, 91 mph, throwing inside."

One rival executive says Mets rookie first baseman **Ike Davis** has a hitch in his swing similar to that of Rockies rightfielder **Brad Hawpe**, making him vulnerable on balls up and in. Another evaluator notes that Davis also needs to work on catching popups and extending for throws at first base.

Scratch the Reds' **Ryan Hanigan** off the list of catchers who might become available. Hanigan is getting increased playing time, and is almost certain to become the team's starter if **Ramon Hernandez** departs as a free agent. The Reds lack a major-league ready catching prospect.

- KEN ROSENTHAL IS A SENIOR WRITER FOR FOXSPORTS.COM

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

workout, and he squeezes in some strength training after the game, in the 40 minutes between the last inning and when the bus leaves the ballpark.

He says it's not easy to avoid all the junk food, especially when the after-game meal comes around 11 p.m. But when interrogated, he can't think of a single unhealthy food for which he has a weakness.

His father says of his son's healthy dietary habits: "I was really impressed with his change in diet - mostly the change in his thinking. He thought relievers had to be big, powerful guys, and he realized that he was actually slowing himself down by not being thinner. Losing that extra weight really helped him."

Moylan says although O'Flaherty may be tagged as a "left-handed specialist," he shouldn't be limited to that label. "It's not just lefties," said the Aussie sidearm. "He can get righties out just as effectively."

O'Flaherty describes his job as a specialist reliever like a fireman's - relaxed, but just waiting to get the call that will send him sprinting into action. Every game, he has to be prepared after the fifth inning to get that call, and he may end up getting the call four or five games in a row.

"It's a little stressful," he said, "always wondering what will happen."

"It's usually a crucial situation," said catcher David Ross. "Those are big outs we need late in the game. Like the Chase Utleys."

Back home in Walla Walla, where the high school has retired O'Flaherty's jersey, waiting for that call is just as stressful.

"My family tries to look at the situation and see if I'm coming in," O'Flaherty said. "Maybe there's runners on base and we're up by a run."

His parents watch the games on a big new computer screen, and from the reports, O'Flaherty has a good idea what his mom is doing when he's on the mound.

"She goes nuts, apparently."

Georgia O'Flaherty became a baseball fan when her boys were Little League players. She learned all the rules and started following boxscores.

"But when things go bad," Bill O'Flaherty said... "it's not fun sitting with her."

He says both of them are proud of Eric, but they handle his brief time on the mound very differently.

"It's fun for me to watch him challenge those guys like Ryan Howard," Bill O'Flaherty said. "I say, 'Go get him!' And Georgia says, 'Oh no. Not Ryan Howard!'"

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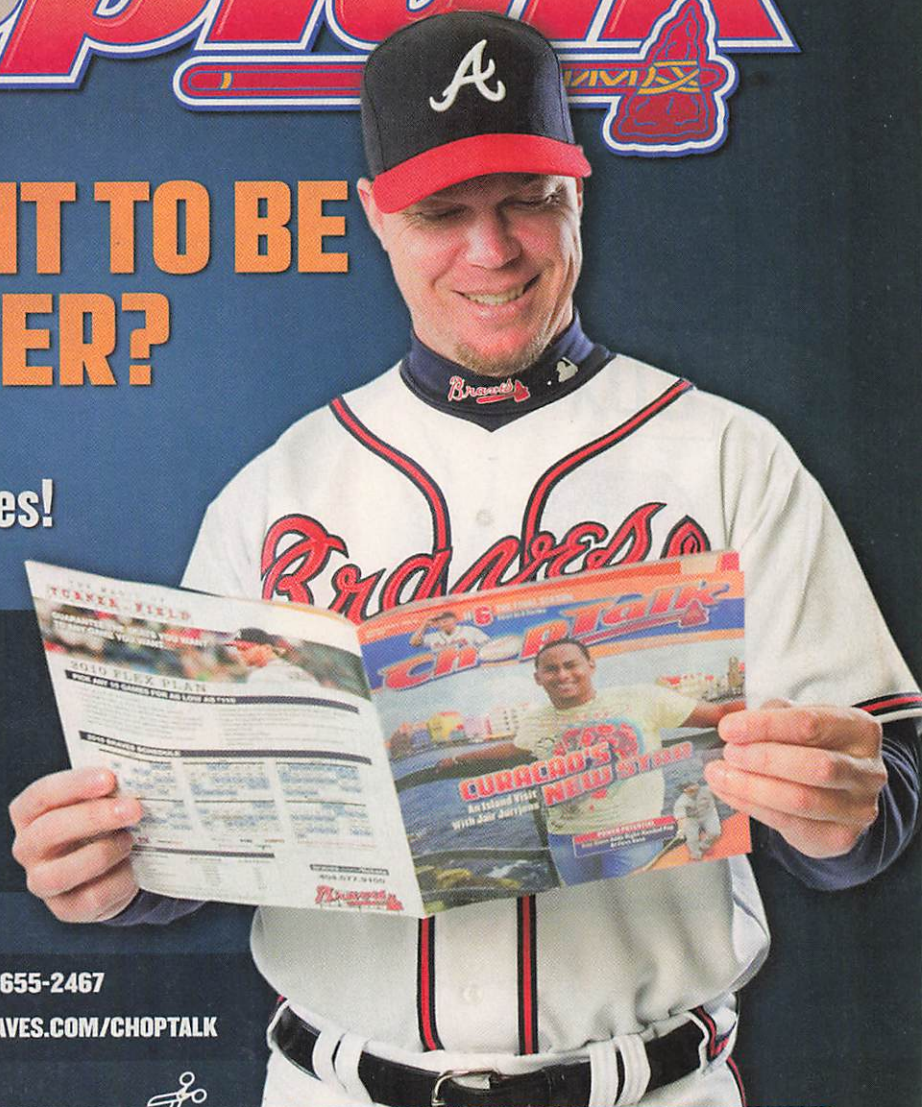
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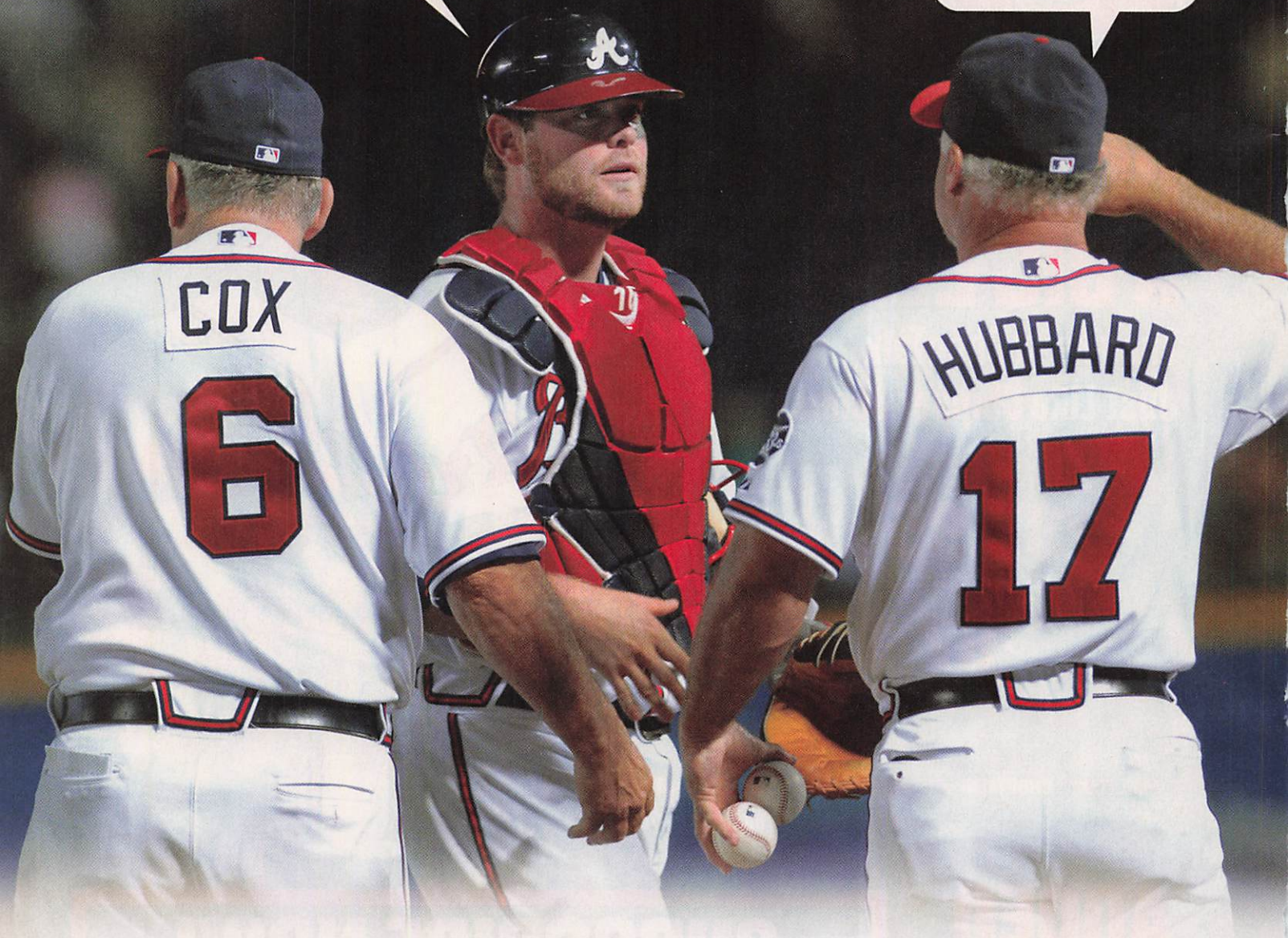
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SHORT-TERM CLOSER

Billy Wagner Says He'll Join Cox And "Go Fishing" At The End Of This Season

BY MARK BOWMAN
OF MLB.COM

ENTERING SPRING TRAINING, there was already reason to wonder if Billy Wagner would call it quits if he set the major league record for saves by a left-handed reliever.

But after notching his 387th career save in the 4-2 win the Braves claimed over the Astros on April 30, Wagner provided clear indication that he entered this year with full knowledge that, regardless of what transpires, this will be the final season of his successful career.

"In 16 seasons, I've had a lot of good times and met a lot of good people," Wagner said. "I think you always miss the competition and camaraderie in your clubhouse. I've enjoyed a lot of people and done a lot of great things. Now, it's time to just share with everybody else."

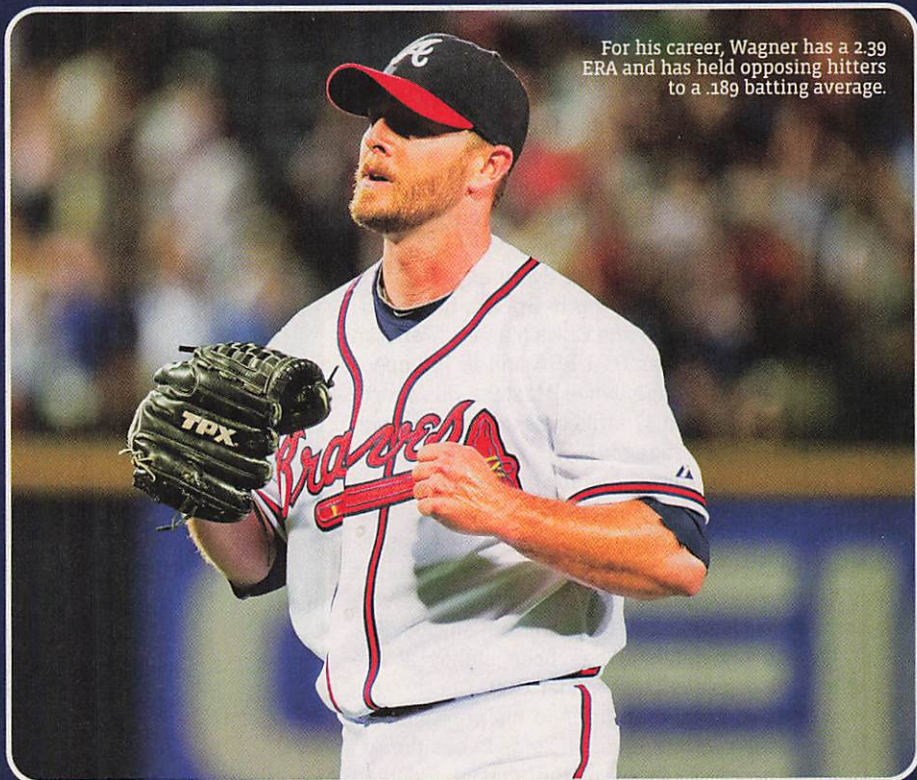
Whether Wagner nears John Franco's record of 424 career saves by a lefty or simply becomes the fifth pitcher to notch at least 400 saves, he plans to spend next summer with his wife, Sarah, and their four children in his rural hometown, Crozet, Va.

"My kids are getting older, and it's time to have another chapter in my life," Wagner said. "It's with my kids and my family."

When Wagner arrived at Turner Field April 30, he approached Bobby Cox to inform him of his decision. The 38-year-old closer said the timing of his decision had nothing to do with the fact that the Braves were in the midst of a nine-game losing streak or that he had totaled just two save opportunities in the season's first 22 games.

"I think he should know what my plans are and what I'm thinking," Wagner said. "There's no secrets. I don't want [Frank Wren] and those guys getting down the road to where they need to make a decision and they need to know where I'm at. That helps the organization out and helps them make an easier decision when they have to make one."

"I don't want to catch the organization by surprise. So I told Bobby, 'That's it for me, and it's time to go fishing.'"



For his career, Wagner has a 2.39 ERA and has held opposing hitters to a .189 batting average.

While watching Wagner combine to make 17 appearances for the Mets and Red Sox after returning from Tommy John surgery last year, the Braves felt comfortable signing him to a one-year, \$6.75 million contract in December. The deal includes a \$6.5 million club option that would vest if he makes 50 appearances this season.

When asked why he would even include this option, which includes a \$250,000 buy-out, Wagner said his agent, Bean Stringfellow, told him that he should provide some insurance in the event that he decided to return for a 17th season.

"That was my agent," Wagner said. "That didn't have anything to do with me. My agent knew that we were thinking about retiring in the off-season. I said no to a two-year [deal], and he said you should get an option, just in case. That's all his doing."

Wagner began his career with the Astros in 1995 and moved into the closer's role two years later. On the way to recording the sec-

ond-most saves ever by a left-handed reliever, he has also enjoyed successful multi-year stints with the Mets and Phillies.

This season provided Wagner an opportunity to fulfill a childhood dream that he developed during those days when he and his grandparents watched the Braves on TBS.

While converting four of his five save opportunities and allowing just two earned runs and five hits in the 11 innings he's pitched this year, Wagner has also shown that his talented left arm is still capable of producing more solid work.

But as Wagner prepared to exit Turner Field after breaking news of his intent to retire, he made it clear that he will be able to walk away at the end of this season without any regrets.

"I think it's just right for me and my family," Wagner said. "I would like to be able to go out and be healthy and just enjoy everything that comes with that final season."



TOP FOUR CLUBS STAYING AFLOAT THANKS TO EXCEPTIONAL PITCHING

THROUGH THE FIRST FOUR-PLUS WEEKS of the season, the Braves' top four minor league teams owned a combined record of 52-71 (.423). Inconsistency with the bats served as the biggest barrier to extended success for all of the clubs, particularly at the Class-A level, where Myrtle Beach ranked last in the Carolina League with a .227 batting average, while Rome was 12th in the 14-team South Atlantic League with a .233 average.

Despite the difficulties at the plate, the Braves displayed some of the best pitching in each league. Rome, for example, ranked second in the SAL with a 2.94 ERA through May 10. Every aspect of the staff was impressive for the R-Braves, headed by starters Julio Teheran and Chris Masters. Teheran led the league with an 0.81 ERA and a .150 opponents' batting average, while Masters was fourth with a 1.18 ERA and 41 strikeouts and second with an opponents' average of .155.

"Teheran has a great feel for how to pitch," said Rome manager Randy Ingle. "He has an outstanding repertoire, and he knows how to use it, especially for a young guy (19). Masters is a little bit older (22), but he's a bulldog on the mound. He's very competitive. He won't back down from anybody."

The starting pitching has been steady at the other levels, as well. Lefthander Brett Oberholtzer was dominant at Rome prior to his promotion to Myrtle Beach, where Randall Delgado has thrown well in the early stages of the season. Delgado paced the Carolina League in strikeouts and ranked second with 40 2/3 innings, fourth with an opponents' batting average of .211, and sixth with a 2.88 ERA through May 10.

Mike Minor has led the Southern League in strikeouts for most of the season while working on some mechanical adjustments at Mississippi. Veterans Todd Redmond, James Parr and Chris Resop have stepped up at Gwinnett and should help keep the G-Braves in the International League's South Division race throughout the season.

Yet the most impressive aspect of all four teams has been

the performance of the bullpens. The Gwinnett relief corps owned a 2.89 ERA, Mississippi checked in at 2.58, while Myrtle Beach was at 3.53 and Rome at 2.72.

The M-Braves' relievers have kept the team around the .500 mark, particularly with the performance of lefthander Lee Hyde and righties Brandon Beachy, Michael Broadway and Brett Butts. The foursome had a combined 1.10 ERA with 80 strikeouts in 65 2/3 innings.



Only 19 years old, Julio Teheran is leading Rome and the Class-A South Atlantic League in both ERA and opponents' batting average.

"I'd hate to think where we'd be without those guys," said Mississippi manager Phillip Wellman. "They've gotten us out of a lot of tight spots and, at times, have been overpowering. Butts and Hyde have picked up where they left off last year and are really attacking the zone. All four are getting ahead in the count and going right after hitters, which is what you have to do in order to be successful in that role."



AFTER SUFFERING a seven-game losing streak in April, Gwinnett climbed back into the hunt when outfielder **Mitch Jones** became the first G-Brave to hit a home run in three straight games on May 1. According to Gwinnett manager **Dave**

Brundage, Jones was simply trying to do too much after leading the Triple-A level with 35 homers in 2009 at Albuquerque.

"He's settled in with a new organization and is hitting the ball the way he's capable," Brundage said. "Early on, he was trying to hit a home run every time..."

First baseman **Freddie Freeman** also overcame a slow start by hitting four home

runs over a six-day stretch, from April 21-26. Freeman was only 4-for-35 with two RBIs until he regained his rhythm and started to turn on the ball with more consistency in order to drive pitches to right field. Helping Freeman was a visit from his father, who noticed his son needed to show more patience at the plate...

In a repeat of 2009, **Wes Timmons** is prov-



ing to be one of the most important cogs in the Gwinnett lineup. The number-two hitter, who batted .242 in April, went 11-for-26 in his first seven games of May, including a four-hit outing versus Pawtucket on May 2. Said Timmons, "I can't remember the last time I had four hits. I don't think I've ever had five hits, unless it was Little League."...

Outfielder **Jordan Schafer** completed a week-long rehabilitation assignment at Rome on May 9 prior to joining Mississippi for a few games and then the G-Braves. Schafer underwent wrist surgery last summer after spending the first two months of the season with Atlanta and then playing nine games with Gwinnett after being sent down on June 2. The lingering effects of the surgery prevented Schafer from playing during spring training...

It's been feast or famine for shortstop **Brandon Hicks** during the first month of the season. Hicks, an excellent fielder who got a brief callup to Atlanta in early May when Yunel Escobar was on the disabled list, was mired in a 1-for-32 slump from April 14-22 before he had two hits at Durham on April 23. The next night he hit a home run in the third inning, had a two-run single in the fourth, and added a double in the sixth. An 0-for-17 slide followed, prior to Hicks going 2-for-4 with two doubles on May 2...

Tim Gustafson joined the G-Braves' rotation after being promoted from Mississippi on April 17. The former Georgia Tech pitcher and Lilburn, Ga., native is working on his mechanics, which the righthander admits has led to feeling out of synch at times. The adjustments are paying some dividends, however, with Gustafson going 2-0 in his first two starts at Coolray Field, where he pitched in front of close to 20 friends and family members both nights...

Chris Resop is making a remarkable transition from closing to starting. The transformation started last year while pitching in Japan and has continued this season. Owner of a mid-90s fastball, Resop has improved his changeup and curveball and is working on a slider. Pitching coach **Derek Botelho** has been most impressed with the way Resop's arm bounces back and maintains strength from start to start. Through May 10, Resop led the International League with 42 strikeouts, ranked second with a 2.27 ERA, and was fourth with an opponents' batting average of .227...

Brundage says he's noticed an improved attitude from outfielder **Gregor Blanco**, who struggled last season at Gwinnett after spending most of 2008 with Atlanta. Blanco

I'M SEEING ATLANTA AS REALISTIC GOAL

Last year was a pretty bad season for me. I was inconsistent mentally. I had high expectations for myself, and then I started to struggle with a few things. It turned out to be a snowball effect, and no matter what I did, I couldn't get out of it.

I also had a couple of minor arm injuries, and I just couldn't seem to get anything rolling. It was very frustrating, knowing that I had the ability but for some reason wasn't able to make the most of it.

My problems in 2009 seemed to start in big league camp during spring training. I joined the organization from the Angels the year before, and I wanted to impress the coaching staff. I started to over-throw, and my mechanics got out of whack.

I felt comfortable since joining the Braves, but I was trying to prove my worth, I guess. I got in the wrong frame of mind while trying to do too much on the mound, and that set the stage for a very difficult season.

I went to play in Mexico over the winter and really got back in the flow of pitching there. I was able to clear my head and pitch well, which helped bring back my confidence. I started having fun again. The baseball down there was pretty good, and I had a chance to learn a different culture. There was a good group of guys there, including Matt Young and Tim Gustafson, who are here in Gwinnett.

I've been able to carry that feeling and the confidence over into this season. I entered this year focused on just doing my job and seeing what happens. Last season a lot of things sidetracked me mentally. It turned out to be a learning experience, because it was really the first time in my career that I had struggled like that.

This year my arm feels good, and my body is in better shape. My mechanics have been a lot cleaner, which has made my fastball command much better. I'm repeating my delivery every time I throw the ball.

This past winter, I did a lot more running in order to keep my legs in better shape. I also lifted a little harder in the weight room. From a baseball standpoint, I didn't change much from what I had done in the past.

I've traditionally been a late starter in spring. For some reason, it takes me a while to get going and to get in a groove on the mound. My first outing this year in big league camp was pretty rough. I then had a few good outings and got sent down. I found some consistency in minor league camp, and that's carried over into the season.

The key for me now is to stay consistent and see what happens. I know I can't strike everybody out, especially going against some of the veteran hitters in Triple-A.

In the last year or so, I've seen a lot of my buddies reach the big leagues. I was with (Kris) Medlen and Tommy (Hanson) in the (Arizona) fall league when I first joined the Braves, and now guys like (Jonny) Venters and (Craig) Kimbrel have been called up to Atlanta.

Seeing them make it helps me realize that getting there is a realistic goal. It makes me want to work that much harder so that hopefully I can get up there at some point in the near future and contribute alongside those guys.

EDITOR'S NOTE

Acquired from the Angels with Casey Kotchman for Mark Teixeira in mid-2008, Steve Marek struggled in his first full season with the Atlanta organization, going 3-4 with a 6.00 ERA between stops at Mississippi and Gwinnett. After a strong showing in Mexico over the winter, the right-handed reliever went 4-0 with four saves and did not allow an earned run in 13 innings at Double A prior to being promoted to Gwinnett in early May.

" I WENT TO PLAY IN MEXICO OVER THE WINTER AND REALLY GOT BACK IN THE FLOW OF PITCHING THERE. "

is playing more aggressively and is no longer feeling sorry for himself, according to the manager. He reached base in 16 straight games in April.



MISSISSIPPI DOUBLE A

MANAGER Phillip Wellman likes the fight the M-Braves are showing as a team. That was evident on May 5 when Mississippi returned from a season-long 10-game road trip and rallied from a 6-0 deficit to defeat Birmingham, 7-6, in 10 innings. "There was definitely no sense of quit," outfielder **Willie Cabrera** told the Jackson Clarion-Ledger after he hit a three-run homer in the fifth inning to key the comeback. "One thing the Braves organization preaches is to play all nine innings, play all nine hard. That's what we did today..."

One player who has impressed Wellman with his constant hustle is **Eric Duncan**, who scored the winning run from first on May 5 when the leftfielder bobbled **Donell Linares'** two-out double in the 10th inning. Duncan was the Yankees' first-round draft pick in 2003 and was considered to be the team's long-term answer at third base for several seasons. He spent the last three years at Triple-A Scranton-Wilkes Barre before signing with Atlanta last winter as a six-year minor league free agent...

The "sink" has returned to **Richard Sullivan's** sinkerball after a tough second half of the 2009 season. Sullivan dominated early last year at Rome before falling victim to some bad luck and poor play after a promotion to Myrtle Beach, where he went 2-12 with a 4.25 ERA. By the time he was promoted to Mississippi late in the season, Sullivan had lost some confidence, as well as the movement on his pitches, particularly his two-seam fastball. A fresh start in 2010, combined with a dedicated off-season conditioning program, has Sullivan throwing like one of the top left-handed prospects in the organization once again...

Mike Minor, Atlanta's first-round draft choice in 2009, pitched better than his 0-3 record through six starts would suggest. The Vanderbilt product struck out nine of the first 17 Birmingham hitters he faced on May 6 and finished with 10 strikeouts in five innings. In his previous start, on April 30, Minor struck out 11 Jacksonville hitters in five innings. The lefthander is working on improving the sharpness of his curveball, as well as his overall command, which led to 19 walks in his first 30 2/3 innings...

Right-handed pitcher **Erik Cordier** continues to display good stuff, including an above-average fastball, which is helping him make a relatively smooth transition from Myrtle Beach. Cordier limited opponents to a .212 batting average and has displayed an improved ability to set up hitters. Control continues to be an issue for Cordier, who issued 21 walks in his first 32 2/3 innings...

Mauro Gomez, who hit 28 home runs at the Class-A level in the Rangers' organization last year, provided some power despite hitting only .194 in his first 30 games. Thirteen of his first 21 hits went for extra bases, including 10 doubles, which tied for third in the Southern League.



MYRTLE BEACH ADVANCED A

RANDALL DELGADO was named the Carolina League Pitcher of the Week for May 3-9, during which he picked up his first win of the season and posted a 1.50 ERA in two starts. In 12 innings, he allowed two earned runs and 12 hits while striking out 16, including nine in a no-decision against Lynchburg. The 20-year-old made several adjustments that produced results last July



Randall Delgado has dominated hitters at Myrtle Beach and was the Carolina League Pitcher of the Week in early May.

at Rome and has continued to overwhelm opponents at the advanced-A level. In his first 40 2/3 innings, the Panama native surrendered only 31 hits and nine walks...

One of the unheralded members of the Pelicans in the early going has been **Matt Crim**. The left-handed pitcher made an emergency start on May 5 and limited Frederick to three hits and an unearned run over six innings. A product of the Citadel who was drafted in the 21st round in 2009, Crim owned a 2.70 ERA after his first two starts and is expected to be a valuable swingman for manager **Rocket Wheeler** the rest of the season...

First baseman **Gerry Rodriguez** had a seven-game hitting streak from April 15-21 and reached base in 13 consecutive games before a glut of strikeouts. Rodriguez struck out 15 times in a five-game stretch from April 27-May 1, including a franchise-record six in the Pelicans' 15-inning, 7-3 loss to Frederick on May 1. Rodriguez led the Carolina League with 49 strikeouts through May 10 and was tied for the top spot with 26 runs. Wheeler said he expects the slugger to post his typical 20-homer, 80-RBI season once again...

Outfielder **Cole Miles** missed 11 games after being hit by a pitch on the right knee during the second game of the season. Miles, who was primarily a second baseman before splitting his time between center field and the infield during Instructional League, has emerged as one of the inspirational leaders on the team...

Inconsistency has plagued outfielder **Adam Milligan**, who was hitting .268 with four home runs against right-handed pitchers but owned a miniscule .043 average with no extra-base hits versus lefthanders. Milligan also had two or more strikeouts in 11 of his first 16 games prior to being placed on the disabled list on May 5 with a strained left shoulder...

Outfielder **Jahdiel Santamaria** was released on April 22 when Miles returned from the disabled list. Third baseman **Samuel Sime** joined the Pelicans on May 2 after opening the season on Rome's disabled list...

A Pelicans starting pitcher did not earn a win until April 28 when **Jose Ortegado** limited Potomac to one earned run and four hits over five innings. Two nights later, **Brett Oberholtzer** earned his first win by scattering eight hits and three earned runs in 5 1/3 innings versus Frederick. Oberholtzer, who was promoted to Myrtle Beach from Rome on April 26 when **Cole Rohrbough** was placed on the disabled list with a left shoulder strain, went 0-2 in four starts with the

TOP 10 PROSPECTS

- 1 **JULIO TEHERAN**
RHP, Age 19, Rome
- 2 **FREDDIE FREEMAN**
1B, 20, Gwinnett
- 3 **RANDALL DELGADO**
RHP, 20, Myrtle Beach
- 4 **ARODYS VIZCAINO**
RHP, 19, Rome
- 5 **MIKE MINOR**
LHP, 22, Mississippi
- 6 **CHRISTIAN BETHANCOURT**
C, 18, Rome
- 7 **BRETT OBERHOLTZER**
LHP, Myrtle Beach
- 8 **CODY JOHNSON**
OF, 21, Mississippi
- 9 **STEPHEN MAREK**
RHP, 26, Gwinnett
- 10 **CHRIS MASTERS**
LHP, 22, Rome

R-Braves despite an impressive 1.96 ERA...

Pitcher **Yelir Castro** entered the Pelicans' May 2 game with a 13.64 ERA and six strikeouts and 12 walks for the season. With the bullpen beleaguered with excess work, Castro responded to the challenge by working five shutout innings and allowing only two hits. He also struck out a career-best eight, which at the time represented the season high for the Pelicans...

Pitcher **Zeke Spruill** broke his right hand and was placed on the disabled list in mid-April. The Braves' second-round draft pick in 2008 out of Marietta, Ga., Spruill has made only two starts this season.



ROME

CLASS A

WITH PITCHING already a team strength, the R-Braves improved their depth when **Brett DeVall** joined the club on May 5. The Braves' first-round draft pick in 2008 went 4-4 with a 3.52 ERA in 10 games at Rome last

year before forearm and elbow discomfort shelved him at mid-season. The lefthander had bone spurs removed from his elbow last fall and opened this season in extended spring training. In his first start of the season, on May 7, DeVall allowed Asheville six hits and two earned runs in five innings...

Julio Teheran was as dominant as any pitcher in the SAL during the first five weeks of the season. Teheran worked seven shutout innings and allowed only four hits with 10 strikeouts to earn his second victory on May 5 against Hagerstown...

Arodys Vizcaino earned four wins in his first six decisions as one of the few Rome starting pitchers to receive consistent run support. Vizcaino was ranked by Baseball America as the third-best prospect in the Yankees' organization last fall prior to being traded to Atlanta in the Javier Vazquez deal. He has lived up to his reputation with his live arm and an impressive combination of a 92-94 mph fastball and a hard curveball. "He's got electrifying stuff," manager **Randy Ingle** said. "You look at Vizcaino and Teheran and you realize they're just puppies. Once they get some experience and some runs, there's no telling what kind of numbers they might put up."...

Outfielder **Robby Hefflinger** joined Rome from extended spring training on April 28 and provided some much-needed hitting. Atlanta's seventh-round draft pick in 2009 batted .342 in his first 11 games, including a 2-for-3 performance with a grand slam and six RBIs versus Hagerstown on May 6...

Catcher **Christian Bethancourt** opened the season by batting .275 in April before going hitless in his first 25 at-bats in May, dropping his average to .202. He was hitting .340 (16-for-47) on the road versus only .064 (3-for-47) at State Mutual Stadium. Bethancourt had only four walks in his first 94 at-bats...

The bats of shortstop **Mycal Jones** and catcher **Braeden Schlehuger** started to warm with the weather. Jones opened May by going 8-for-25 with five RBIs in eight games. Schlehuger was hitting .316 in his first five games of the month. Both players hit only .125 in April...

The R-Braves had only seven home runs in their first 31 games. Rome went 38 innings without scoring a run and was shut out in four straight games, from April 26-29... Ingle tried to make the most of the team's on-base opportunities with aggressive baserunning. **L.V. Ware** and **Kyle Rose** ranked among the league leaders in steals with 12 and 11, respectively, but the club was caught nearly as many times (35) as they were successful (36).

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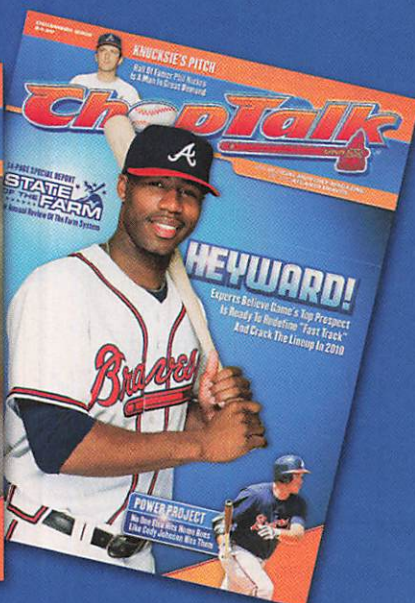
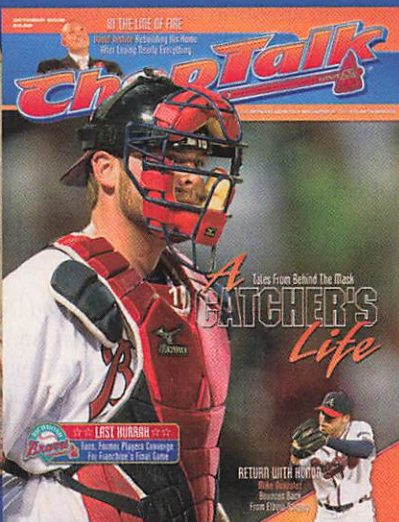
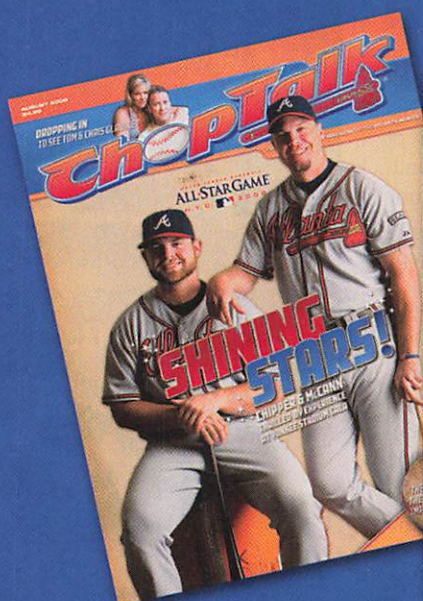


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October 2005	Andruw Jones
November 2005	Brian McCann
December 2005	Andruw Jones
January 2006	Edgar Renteria
February 2006	Niekro, Aaron, Lemaster
March 2006	LaRoche Family
April 2006	Andruw, Smoltz, Chipper
May 2006	Chris Reitsma
June 2006	Francoeur's Slam
July 2006	Edgar Renteria
August 2006	Brian McCann
September 2006	Bob Wickman
October 2006	John Smoltz
November 2006	Bobby Cox
December 2006	Jeff Francoeur

January 2007	Rafael Soriano
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March 2007	Mike Gonzalez
April 2007	Andruw Jones (Sold Out)
May 2007	Hubbard & Johnson (Sold Out)
June 2007	John Smoltz
July 2007	Diaz & Harris
August 2007	Edgar Renteria
September 2007	Mark Teixeira
October 2007	Jeff Francoeur
November 2007	Chipper Jones
December 2007	John Smoltz
January 2008	Tom Glavine
February 2008	Tim Hudson
March 2008	Mark Kotsay
April 2008	Teixeira & Jones
May 2008	Brian McCann
June 2008	Jair Jurrjens
July 2008	Chipper Jones
August 2008	McCann & Jones

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October 2008	Brian McCann
November 2008	Chipper Jones
December 2008	Pete Van Wieren
January 2009	Frank Wren
February 2009	Hank Aaron
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April 2009	Vazquez, Lowe & Kawakami
May 2009	Bobby Cox & Chipper Jones
June 2009	Jeff Francoeur
July 2009	Nate McLouth
August 2009	Tommy Hanson
September 2009	Martin Prado
October 2009	Yunel Escobar
November 2009	Peter Moylan
December 2009	Jason Heyward
January 2010	Billy Wagner
February 2010	Jair Jurrjens
March 2010	Derek Lowe
April 2010	Bobby Cox
May 2010	Jason Heyward

FARM STATISTICS

THROUGH MAY 12



GWINNETT

15-17

INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE TRIPLE A | COOLRAY FIELD (678) 277-0300

BATTERS	AVG	G	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	BB	SO	SB
Blanco, Gregor (OF)	.272	29	103	15	28	3	0	1	7	14	22	7
Bolivar, Luis (SS)	.154	8	26	1	4	2	0	0	1	2	5	2
Boscan, J.C. (C)	.137	16	51	2	7	2	0	0	3	5	9	1
Canizares, Barbaro (1B)	.292	26	96	14	28	3	0	1	9	8	13	0
Cleven, Brent (OF)	.265	25	83	13	22	7	0	1	14	16	25	3
Freeman, Freddie (1B)	.272	30	114	16	31	8	1	4	16	19	20	0
Hicks, Brandon (SS)	.179	25	84	7	15	4	0	1	6	8	21	4
Holt, J.C. (2B)	.167	15	36	4	6	0	0	0	3	3	6	1
Jones, Mitch (OF)	.269	28	108	12	29	13	1	4	11	6	28	0
Sammons, Clint (C)	.167	17	54	6	9	1	0	1	8	8	10	0
Thurston, Joe (INF)	.231	30	104	5	24	4	0	2	13	9	12	2
Timmons, Wes (3B)	.276	30	98	12	27	7	1	0	9	16	12	6
Young, Matt (OF)	.229	29	109	14	25	7	0	1	7	10	14	6

PITCHERS	W-L	ERA	G	GS	SV	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	OBA
Dunn, Michael	1-0	0.63	10	0	1	14.1	10	1	1	8	18	.196
Gearrin, Cory	0-1	3.24	13	0	0	16.2	14	7	6	15	16	.237
Gomez, Mariano	1-0	1.62	10	0	1	16.2	16	6	3	5	10	.262
Gustafson, Tim	2-1	5.89	4	4	0	18.1	24	13	12	9	6	.316
Kimble, Craig	0-0	1.20	11	0	0	15.0	7	2	2	5	21	.143
Lyman, Jeff	0-0	3.52	10	0	0	15.1	11	9	6	15	11	.204
Marek, Stephen	0-0	3.86	2	0	0	2.1	2	1	1	0	1	.222
Martinez, Cristhian	1-1	4.05	10	0	0	20.0	17	10	9	4	19	.218
Nunez, Vladimir	0-0	2.45	6	0	0	11.0	10	3	3	5	9	.244
Parr, James	2-3	4.58	7	7	0	35.1	40	18	18	12	25	.292
Proctor, Scott	1-2	11.25	8	0	0	8.0	18	10	10	2	10	.462
Redmond, Todd	3-4	5.45	7	7	0	36.1	40	24	22	6	35	.280
Resop, Chris	3-1	2.27	7	7	0	35.2	29	9	9	18	42	.227
Reynoso, Ryne	0-5	5.09	7	7	0	35.1	50	22	20	15	20	.342
Venters, Jonny	1-0	1.35	2	1	0	6.2	4	1	1	1	6	.167



MISSISSIPPI

16-17

SOUTHERN LEAGUE DOUBLE A | TRUSTMARK PARK (601) 864-7600

BATTERS	AVG	G	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	BB	SO	SB
Bolivar, Luis (SS)	.263	22	80	12	21	3	2	0	6	9	23	2
Cabrera, Willie (OF)	.304	32	115	16	35	12	0	2	18	12	15	1
Duncan, Eric (INF)	.302	32	116	9	35	8	1	2	17	9	25	1
Gomez, Mauro (1B)	.200	32	115	14	23	11	0	4	16	10	28	0
Gonzalez, Juan (INF)	.286	4	14	0	4	1	0	0	0	2	4	0
Gress, Randy (INF)	.281	14	32	6	9	1	0	1	3	4	10	0
Johnson, Benji (C)	.100	10	30	4	3	1	0	0	1	5	12	0
Johnson, Cody (OF)	.250	31	108	15	27	5	0	7	20	6	45	6
Jones, Travis (2B)	.211	24	57	9	12	2	0	0	2	5	17	2
Linares, Donell (3B)	.261	31	119	18	31	7	0	4	14	8	15	0
Mercado, Orlando (C)	.267	26	86	13	23	3	0	0	9	14	21	1
Rodriguez, Concepcion (OF)	.193	21	57	4	11	2	0	0	5	4	16	1
Romero, Alex (OF)	.280	32	125	16	35	5	1	1	13	14	13	1
Schafer, Jordan (OF)	.375	2	8	2	3	1	0	0	0	1	2	0
Zazueta, Amadeo (SS)	.000	2	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0

PITCHERS	W-L	ERA	G	GS	SV	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	OBA
Abreu, Juan	0-0	.00	2	0	0	3.0	3	0	0	1	3	.250
Beachy, Brandon	1-0	1.33	10	0	0	20.1	16	5	3	10	24	.216
Broadway, Michael	1-1	1.46	10	0	0	12.1	8	2	2	7	19	.182
Butts, Brett	0-0	0.51	10	0	1	17.2	15	2	1	2	23	.227
Chapman, Jaye	0-1	6.75	2	0	0	1.1	2	1	1	0	2	.400
Cofield, Kyle	1-1	4.43	5	4	0	20.1	17	11	10	10	15	.218
Cordier, Erik	1-3	4.41	6	6	0	32.2	24	21	16	21	28	.212
Diamond, Scott	1-3	5.17	6	6	0	31.1	39	18	18	18	32	.320
Gustafson, Tim	1-0	0.00	2	0	0	4.0	3	3	0	2	3	.188
Huber, Jon	0-0	3.38	3	0	0	2.2	1	1	1	2	1	.143
Hyde, Lee	1-0	0.98	12	0	3	18.1	14	5	2	5	17	.212
Marek, Stephen	4-0	0.00	11	0	4	13.0	7	0	0	1	18	.163
Minor, Mike	1-3	4.17	7	7	0	36.2	30	24	17	22	54	.224
Palica, Thomas	1-1	9.20	11	0	0	14.2	18	15	15	9	23	.300
Sullivan, Richard	1-2	5.77	6	6	0	34.1	47	26	22	11	20	.346
Thompson, Jacob	2-2	5.61	8	4	0	25.2	30	19	16	9	15	.288



MYRTLE BEACH

11-22

CAROLINA LEAGUE ADVANCED A | BBST COASTAL FIELD (843) 918-6002

BATTERS	AVG	G	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	BB	SO	SB
Avila, Gerardo (1B)	.302	26	96	18	29	6	1	6	18	13	29	1
Barba, Ryan (SS/2B)	.160	22	75	4	12	6	0	0	3	2	11	2
Campusano, Yoel (2B)	.194	30	108	14	21	5	0	3	11	18	23	1
Culver, Calvin (OF)	.283	16	53	4	15	2	0	0	6	4	7	0
Gress, Randy (INF)	.167	3	6	1	1	0	0	0	0	2	3	0
Harrichak, Cory (OF)	.179	7	28	1	5	1	0	0	1	1	5	0
Kennelly, Matthew (C)	.250	19	64	9	16	2	1	1	11	13	10	1
Miles, Cole (OF)	.247	22	89	9	22	1	4	0	7	10	16	9
Milligan, Adam (OF)	.200	21	85	13	17	3	0	4	8	9	35	2
Moody, Shayne (3B)	.241	23	87	15	21	2	0	1	9	6	12	0
Rodriguez, Gerardo (OF)	.244	32	127	27	31	6	3	7	20	10	52	1
Santamaria, Jahdiel (OF)	.100	9	30	2	3	0	0	1	2	1	7	0
Shehan, Chris (OF)	.188	21	69	5	13	1	2	0	3	9	17	3
Sime, Samuel (3B)	.343	10	35	1	12	0	0	0	4	1	6	0
Sucre, Jesus (C)	.223	29	112	9	25	5	0	3	15	4	15	0
Zazueta, Amadeo (SS)	.180	16	61	5	11	3	0	2	5	2	8	1

PITCHERS	W-L	ERA	G	GS	SV	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	OBA
Abreu, Juan	0-0	8.22	8	0	1	15.1	14	14	14	8	15	.241
Castro, Yelari	2-1	7.20	10	1	0	20.0	21	17	16	18	21	.273
Chapman, Jaye	0-1	5.68	10	0	2	12.2	10	8	8	7	21	.208
Crim, Matthew	2-1	3.82	8	3	0	33.0	32	20	14	13	13	.256
Delgado, Randall	1-2	2.88	7	7	0	40.2	31	15	13	9	45	.211
Francis, David	0-1	3.68	7	0	0	14.2	18	9	6	7	12	.295
Harris, Tyrelle	0-0	6.00	3	0	0	3.0	5	2	2	1	4	.385
Hoover, J.J.	1-2	5.24	7	7	0	34.1	45	24	20	10	25	.315
Oberholtzer, Brett	1-2	7.04	3	3	0	15.1	23	12	12	6	10	.359
Ortega, Jose	2-3	5.24	6	6	0	22.1	33	16	13	6	11	.340
Paulino, Angelo	1-0	2.11	12	0	1	21.1	22	5	5	7	21	.278
Pope, Van	0-2	7.20	7	0	0	10.0	8	9	8	13	4	.211
Pruneda, Benino	0-1	4.02	11	0	1	15.2	15	10	7	11	21	.250
Rodgers, Chad	1-3	6.19	9	0	0	16.0	18	13	11	12	16	.290
Rohrbough, Cole	0-2	12.15	4	4	0	13.1	25	19	18	9	13	.417
Spruill, Zeke	0-1	12.96	2	2	0	8.1	17	12	12	1	4	.415



ROME

12-20

SOUTH ATLANTIC LEAGUE CLASS A | STATE MUTUAL STADIUM (706) 368-9388

BATTERS	AVG	G	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	BB	SO	SB
Bethancourt, Christian (C)	.214	25	98	6	21	4	0	1	7	4	15	0
Flores, Ramon (OF)	.220	17	59	6	13	2	1	1	2	2	11	2
Harrichak, Cory (OF)	.247	24	85	5	21	4	2	0	7	12	11	4
Hefflinger, Robert (OF)	.310	12	42	5	13	1	0	1	9	5	10	0
Jones, Mycal (SS)	.182	28	110	12	20	6	0	3	13	6	33	2
Kramer, Matt (C)	.178	12	45	0	8	3	0	0	2	0	15	0
Kreke, Jordan (3B)	.243	27	107	10	26	5	1	0	13	7	15	2
Lovett, Chris (3B)	.207	17	58	5	12	1	1	0	2	5	10	0
Marval, Osman (1B)	.191	16	47	3	9	1	0	1	6	5	9	0
Odreman, Alberto (1B)	.111	9	27	1	3	1	0	0	0	1	11	0
Rose, Kyle (OF)	.311	27	106	12	33	1	1	0	6	14	23	11
Schafer, Jordan (OF)	.273	6	22	4	6	2	0	0	1	4	5	2
Schlehuber, Braeden (C)	.205	12	39	4	8	2	0	0	3	0	4	0
Ware, L.V. (OF)	.213	29	94	13	20	2	0	1	6	7	22	12
Weaver, Matthew (2B)	.252	28	107	7	27	6	2	0	9	5	28	2
Wiley, Derek (1B)	.278	5	18	2	5	1	0	0	2	1	3	0

PITCHERS	W-L	ERA	G	GS	SV	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	OBA
Avilan, Luis	1-1	1.65	8	0	0	16.1	10	5	3	7	14	.175
Berryhill, Thomas	0-1	5.56	8	0	0	11.1	11	9	7	4	6	.244
Clemens, Paul	2-0	1.42	8	0	1	19.0	11	5	3	8	16	.164
DeVall, Brett	0-1	3.60	1	1	0	5.0	6	4	2	1	4	.300
Hale, David	0-4	7.99	6	6	0	23.2	43	26	21	10	14	.384
Harris, Tyrelle	0-0	2.53	9	0	4	10.2	9	3	3	4	12	.231
Lopez, Robinson	1-1	2.61	8	0	0	20.2	16	7	6	10	27	.213
Lorick, Jeffrey	0-0	2.70	3	0	0	3.1	5	1	1	1	5	.333
Masters, Christopher	1-2	1.18	7	6	0	38.0	20	11	5	10	41	.152
Oeholtzert, Brett	0-2	1.96	4	4	0	23.0	22	7	5	5	19	.262
Rasmus, Cory	1-1	1.80	8	1	1	20.0	12	6	4	7	26	.164
Surinach, Julio	0-1	3.38	8	0	1	13.1	13	7	5	4	10	.255
Teheran, Julio	2-2	1.14	7	7	0	39.1	23	8	5	10	45	.168
Vizcaino, Arodys	4-2	4.35	6	6	0	31.0	32	17	15	9	34	.274
Weber, Ryan	0-2	5.54	6	1	0	13.0	15	11	8	4	7	.300
Wilson, Andrew	0-0	6.75	3	0	0	2.2	1	2	2	2	2	.125

MAY / JUNE

HOME

AWAY

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AND RADIO
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AFFILIATES.

ROCK 100.5

SPORTS RADIO
680
The Fan

FSS FS SOUTH

PTV Peachtree TV

SS SPORTSOUTH

FOX FOX

ESPN ESPN

2010 SCHEDULE

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
23 1:30 PIT FSS	24	25 7:00 FLA SS	26 7:00 FLA SS	27 7:00 FLA SS	28 7:30 PIT PTV	29 7:00 PIT SS
30 1:30 PIT FSS	31 1:00 PHI SS	1 7:00 PHI PTV/ESPN	2 1:00 PHI SS	3 10:00 LA SS	4 10:00 LA SS	5 10:00 LA SS
6 TBD LA FSS	7 9:30 ARI SS	8 9:30 ARI SS	9 9:30 ARI SS	10 3:30 ARI SS	11 8:00 MIN SS	12 7:00 MIN SS
13 2:00 MIN FSS	14	15 7:00 TAM PTV	16 7:00 TAM PTV	17 7:00 TAM PTV	18 7:30 KC PTV	19 7:00 KC SS
20 1:30 KC FSS	21	22 8:00 CHI AL PTV	23 8:00 CHI AL PTV	24 2:00 CHI AL SS	25 7:30 DET PTV	26 4:00 DET SS
27 1:30 DET FSS	28 7:00 WAS PTV	29 7:00 WAS PTV	30 7:00 WAS SS			

JULY

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1	2 7:30 FLA PTV	3 4:00 FLA FOX
4 5:00 FLA FSS	5 7:00 PHI PTV	6 7:00 PHI PTV	7 7:00 PHI PTV	8	9 7:00 NYM SS	10 4:00 NYM FOX
11 1:00 NYM FSS	12	13 ALL-STAR GAME ANAHEIM	14	15 7:00 MIL PTV	16 7:30 MIL PTV	17 7:00 MIL SS
18 1:30 MIL FSS	19	20 7:00 SD PTV	21 7:00 SD PTV	22 1:00 SD SS	23 7:00 FLA SS	24 7:00 FLA SS
25 1:00 FLA FSS	26	27 7:00 WAS SS	28 7:00 WAS SS	29 12:30 WAS SS	30 7:00 CIN SS	31 7:00 CIN SS

AUGUST

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 1:00 CIN FSS	2 7:00 NYM ESPN	3 7:00 NYM PTV	4 7:00 NYM PTV	5 7:00 SF PTV	6 7:30 SF PTV	7 4:00 SF FOX
8 1:30 SF FSS	9 8:00 HOU SS	10 8:00 HOU SS	11 2:00 HOU SS	12	13 7:30 LA PTV	14 7:00 LA PTV
15 1:30 LA FSS	16 7:00 LA PTV	17 7:00 WAS SS	18 7:00 WAS SS	19 1:00 WAS SS	20 2:00 CHC SS	21 4:00 CHC FOX
22 TBD CHC FSS	23 8:30 COL SS	24 8:30 COL SS	25 3:00 COL SS	26	27 7:30 FLA SS	28 4:00 FLA FOX
29 1:30 FLA FSS	30 7:00 NYM PTV	31 7:00 NYM PTV				

SEPT./OCT.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1 7:00 NYM PTV/ESPN	2 7:00 NYM PTV	3 7:00 FLA SS	4 7:00 FLA SS
5 1:00 FLA FSS	6 1:30 PIT SS	7 7:00 PIT SS	8 7:00 PIT SS	9 7:00 STL PTV	10 7:30 STL PTV	11 4:00 STL FOX
12 1:30 STL FSS	13 7:00 WAS SS	14 7:00 WAS SS	15 12:00 WAS SS	16	17 7:00 NYM SS	18 4:00 NYM FOX
19 1:00 NYM FSS	20 7:00 PHI SS	21 7:00 PHI SS	22 7:00 PHI SS	23	24 7:00 WAS SS	25 1:00 WAS SS
26 1:30 WAS FSS	27 7:00 FLA SS	28 7:00 FLA SS	29 4:30 FLA SS	30	1 7:30 PHI SS	2 7:00 PHI SS
3 1:30 PHI FSS						

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PROMOTION SCHEDULE

EVERY FRIDAY GAME

PUBLIX POST-GAME FIREWORKS

EVERY SUNDAY GAME

PRE-GAME ALUMNI MEET & GREET

POST-GAME KIDS RUN THE BASES

SUNDAY	MAY 30	PIRATES	FREE KEYCHAINS
MONDAY	MAY 31	PHILLIES	BEACH BOYS CONCERT
WEDNESDAY	JUNE 2	PHILLIES	BUSINESS FAN DAY
MONDAY	JUNE 28	NATIONALS	BUCK BELUE "BUCK NIGHT"
TUESDAY	JUNE 15	RAYS	COLLEGE NIGHT
FRIDAY	JUNE 18	ROYALS	'70S NIGHT
SUNDAY	JUNE 20	ROYALS	PROSTATE CANCER AWARENESS DAY
THURSDAY	JULY 22	PADRES	BUCK BELUE "BUCK NIGHT"
FRIDAY	AUG. 6	GIANTS	WILD WEST NIGHT
SUNDAY	AUG. 8	GIANTS	ULTIMATE KIDS DAY
MONDAY	AUG. 16	DODGERS	BUCK BELUE "BUCK NIGHT"
THURSDAY	AUG. 19	NATIONALS	BUSINESS FAN DAY
			HOME SCHOOL DAY
SATURDAY	AUG. 28	MARLINS	CLASSIC CAR SHOW
SUNDAY	AUG. 29	MARLINS	BARK IN THE PARK
MONDAY	AUG. 30	METS	BUCK BELUE "BUCK NIGHT"
THURSDAY	SEPT. 2	METS	NASCAR NIGHT
THURSDAY	SEPT. 9	CARDINALS	ROBERTO CLEMENTE/LATIN & HISPANIC HERITAGE NIGHT
SUNDAY	SEPT. 12	CARDINALS	BREAST CANCER AWARENESS DAY
MONDAY	SEPT. 13	NATIONALS	BUCK BELUE "BUCK NIGHT"
WEDNESDAY	SEPT. 15	NATIONALS	BUSINESS FAN DAY
MONDAY	SEPT. 27	MARLINS	BUCK BELUE "BUCK NIGHT"
FRI.-SUNDAY	OCT. 1-3	PHILLIES	FAN APPRECIATION WEEKEND
SATURDAY	OCT. 2	PHILLIES	BOBBY COX TRIBUTE

702109

TO PURCHASE TICKETS OR FOR TICKET INFORMATION,
CALL (404) 577-9100 OR VISIT braves.com

INDIVIDUAL GAME TICKETS

Single game tickets are available at braves.com/tickets, the Braves box office at Turner Field, by calling 1-800-745-3000, and at all TicketMaster outlets.

LOCATION	PRICE	PREMIUM*
Skyline#	\$1	\$1
Upper Pavilion	\$6	\$8
Upper Reserved	\$8	\$12
Upper Box	\$12	\$16
Terrace Reserved	\$24	\$28
Field/Terrace Pavilion	\$24	\$28
Field Reserved	\$28	\$32
Golden Moon Casino Pavilion	\$28	\$32
Terrace Level	\$36	\$40
Field Level	\$38	\$42
Golden Moon Casino Level	\$44	\$48
Dugout Level	\$64	\$68
Henry Aaron Seats	\$74	\$78

#Available only at Turner Field two and a half hours before games.

*Premium games include July 4 and all Friday and Saturday games.

2-FOR-1 TICKETS

- * **Mondays** 2 Golden Moon Casino Pavilion for \$28
- * **Tuesdays** 2 Upper Reserved for \$8
- * **Wednesdays** 2 Field/Terrace Pavilion for \$24
- * Fans with college or military ID or a AAA card also can purchase two Upper Box tickets for the price of one.

\$1 TICKETS

- * **\$1 SkyLine Seats** - Available two and a half hours before every game at the Turner Field Ticket Office.
- * **Buck Belue Buck Night** - \$1 Tickets for all Upper Reserved Seats On Following Mondays (all 7:10 p.m.): June 28 vs. Nationals, Aug. 2 vs. Mets, Aug. 16 vs. Dodgers, Aug. 30 vs. Mets, Sept. 13 vs. Nationals, Sept. 27 vs. Marlins.

FAMILY VALUE PLAN

Get 4 tickets, 4 hotdogs, 4 Cokes, a parking pass, a program and \$5 Chevron gift card for as low as \$59 (upper box seats). Upgrade to Outfield Pavilion for \$79 (total) or Golden Moon Casino Pavilion for \$99 (total).

SEASON TICKET PLANS

The following ticket plans are on sale. For more information, visit braves.com or call (404) 577-9100 to inquire about pro-rated options.

TYPE

***Added Value:** Save 20 percent by adding \$10 to your game ticket, which is stored on the bar code for each game, for \$8. The added value can be used at any concession stand. \$10 is already included in the Henry Aaron and Club Level areas.

***755 Club:** A 755 Club membership is automatically included in Henry Aaron, Club Level and Club Pavilion areas.

***2-For-1:** 2-For-1 Season Tickets are available in rows 11 and higher in the Upper Box.

FULL SEASON

Level	*Type	Price
Henry Aaron Seats	Added Value/755 Club	\$5,146
Dugout	Regular	\$4,482
Terrace	Regular	\$2,490
Field	Regular	\$2,822
Club	Added Value/755 Club	\$3,154
Outfield Pavilion	Regular	\$1,162
Upper Box	2-For-1	\$415
Terrace Reserved	Regular	\$996
Field Reserved	Regular	\$1,162
Club Pavilion	755 Club	\$1,162
Upper Pavilion	Regular	\$249

HALF SEASON

Level	*Type	Price
Field	Regular	\$1,512
Club	Added Value/755 Club	\$1,764
Outfield Pavilion	Regular	\$756
Upper Box	Regular	\$462

WEEKENDS

Level	*Type	Price
Field	Regular	\$1,080
Club	Added Value/755 Club	\$1,260
Outfield	Regular	\$540
Upper Box	Regular	\$330

FLEX PLANS

- * Minimum of 10 games for as low as \$110 per seat.
- * Change dates if your plans change.

Section	Gate Price	Flex Price
Golden Moon	\$44/48	\$42
Field Level	\$38/42	\$37
Terrace	\$36/40	\$35
Field/Terrace Pavilion	\$24/28	\$22
Upper Box	\$12/16	\$11

GROUP TICKETS

Groups of 20 or more receive discounted prices. Call (404) 577-9100 for information.

5-GAME PLANS

Location	Price	Save Up To
Terrace	\$175	13%
Field/Terrace Pavilion	\$110	21%
Upper Box	\$55	31%

SUMMER SATURDAYS

May 29 vs. Pirates, June 26 vs. Tigers, July 17 vs. Brewers, Aug. 7 vs. Giants, Aug. 14 vs. Dodgers.

SUMMER WEEKENDS

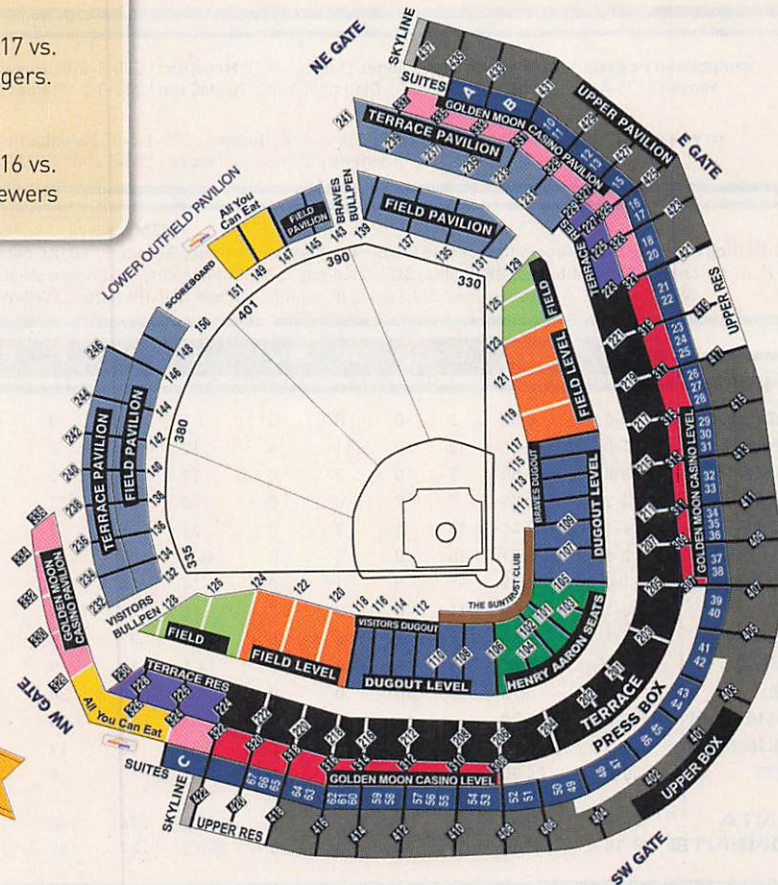
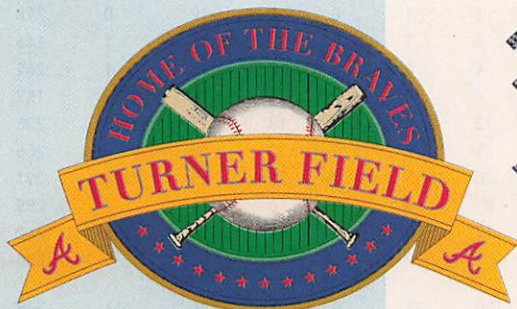
June 25 vs. Tigers, June 26 vs. Tigers, July 16 vs. Brewers, July 17 vs. Brewers, July 18 vs. Brewers

PRIVATE SUITES

Located on the Golden Moon Casino Level. Climate controlled suite plus access to outside balcony seating. TVs, refrigerator, icemaker, wet bar and telephone. Available from two hours before the game until the last pitch. Call (404) 577-9100.

BATTING PRACTICE EXPERIENCE

The Braves VIP Batting Practice Experience allows fans to get up close with the players during pre-game BP. The Batting Practice Experience begins three hours prior to the first pitch and is not available before Sunday home games (except July 4) or before afternoon games. The cost is \$55 for Monday-Thursday games and \$70 for Friday-Saturday games. Groups of 20 or more receive discounted rates (call 404-577-9100). BP Experience tickets do not include a game ticket. A separate game ticket must be purchased.



INDIVIDUAL STATS

THROUGH MAY 13

	AVG	G	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	TB	BB	SO	SB	CS	OBP	SLG	E
BATTERS																	
HINSKE	.333	26	39	6	13	6	1	0	13	21	5	8	0	0	.409	.538	1
PRADO	.312	34	141	21	44	10	0	2	12	60	10	21	0	2	.359	.426	1
HEYWARD	.301	30	93	20	28	5	0	8	28	57	20	27	2	0	.431	.613	2
INFANTE	.278	23	79	12	22	5	0	1	9	30	5	15	2	0	.3218	.380	5
GLAUS	.267	34	116	14	31	3	0	4	23	46	16	28	0	0	.358	.397	2
CONRAD	.250	22	24	7	6	3	0	2	5	15	4	8	1	0	.357	.625	0
RIGHT	.000		3		0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2			.250	.000	
LEFT	.286		21		6	3	0	2	5	15	3	6			.375	.714	
McCANN	.242	29	91	15	22	5	0	2	11	33	23	18	1	0	.408	.363	4
JONES	.239	28	88	13	21	7	0	2	8	34	25	12	2	0	.407	.386	4
RIGHT	.219		32		7	1	0	2	3	14	6	4			.342	.438	
LEFT	.250		56		14	6	0	0	5	20	19	8			.440	.357	
ROSS	.222	11	27	3	6	0	0	0	4	6	3	6	0	1	.300	.222	1
ESCOBAR	.215	22	79	7	17	4	0	0	8	21	9	9	2	0	.295	.266	3
CABRERA	.196	32	107	10	21	4	0	0	8	25	13	15	0	1	.283	.234	1
RIGHT	.139		36		5	3	0	0	1	8	5	5			.244	.222	
LEFT	.225		71		16	1	0	0	7	17	8	10			.304	.239	
DIAZ	.181	25	72	5	13	3	1	0	5	18	5	19	2	0	.234	.250	1
McLOUTH	.167	32	96	10	16	4	0	2	7	26	17	28	1	2	.302	.271	1
HICKS	.000	5	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	.000	.000	0
ATLANTA	.239	34	1,116	149	267	60	2	23	142	400	159	238	13	6	.337	.358	26
OPPONENTS	.248	34	1,103	140	274	58	4	28	133	424	118	224	17	11	.323	.384	29

PINCH-HITTERS (AVG-H-HR-RBI) Jones (.000-1-0-1), McLouth (.000-1-0-0), Heyward (.500-1-0-2), Cabrera (.500-1-0-0), Diaz (.286-2-0-0), Hinske (.235-4-0-3), Conrad (.200-2-0-0), Glaus (.000-0-0-0), McCann (.000-0-0-0), Ross (.000-0-0-0), Hicks (.000-0-0-0), TEAM (.250-12-0-6).

PITCHERS (AVG-H-HR-RBI) Medlen (.250-1-0-0), Hudson (.200-3-0-0), Kawakami (.111-1-0-0), Lowe (.077-1-0-1), Hanson (.063-1-0-0), Jurrjens (.000-0-0-0), Reyes (.000-0-0-0), STAFF (.111-7-0-1).

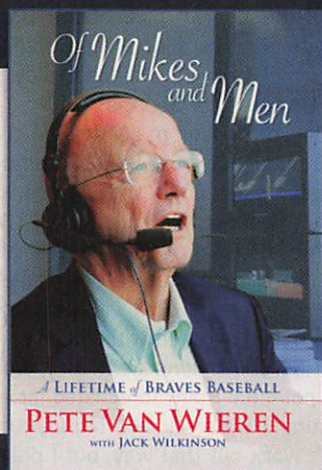
KEY

AVG-Batting average, SLG-Slugging percentage, OBP-On-base percentage, G-Games, AB-At-bats, R-Runs, H-Hits, 2B-Doubles, 3B-Triples, HR-Home runs, RBI-Runs batted in, TB-Total bases, BB-Walks, SO-Strikeouts, SB-Stolen bases, CS-Caught stealing, E-Errors, W-L-Wins-Losses, ERA-Earned run average, GS-Starts, GF-Games finished, SV-Saves, IP-Innings pitched, HB-Hit batters, WP-Wild pitches, OBA-Opponents' batting average.

	W-L	ERA	G	GS	GF	SV	IP	H	R	ER	HR	HB	BB	SO	WP	OBA
PITCHERS																
KIMBREL	0-0	0.00	2	0	0	0	1.1	1	0	0	0	0	2	2	1	.200
WAGNER	1-0	1.50	12	0	11	4	12	6	2	2	1	1	5	18	1	.146
VENTERS	0-0	1.50	9	0	3	0	12	6	2	2	0	0	9	9	1	.150
HANSON	3-2	2.30	7	7	0	0	43	36	12	11	3	3	13	46	0	.231
MEDLEN	1-1	2.45	13	1	3	0	22	25	7	6	1	0	3	19	0	.298
O'FLAHERTY	2-1	2.51	16	0	3	0	14.1	7	5	4	1	0	5	11	1	.146
MOYLAN	1-0	2.57	17	0	1	0	14	14	4	4	0	0	10	13	1	.269
SAITO	0-1	2.57	14	0	3	0	14	8	5	4	0	0	5	16	0	.157
HUDSON	3-1	2.64	7	7	0	0	44.1	37	13	13	4	2	18	17	3	.233
CHAVEZ	0-0	5.65	11	0	9	0	14.1	14	9	9	2	0	3	15	0	.255
LOWE	5-3	5.73	8	8	0	0	44	50	30	28	5	0	21	25	1	.291
KAWAKAMI	0-6	5.73	6	6	0	0	33	38	23	21	6	0	10	16	2	.295
JURRJENS	0-3	6.38	5	5	0	0	24	22	19	17	3	1	11	15	0	.242
REYES	0-0	24.30	1	0	0	0	3.1	10	9	9	2	0	3	2	0	.500
ATLANTA	16-18	3.96	34	34	33	4	295.2	274	140	130	28	8	118	224	11	.248
OPPONENTS	18-16	3.86	34	34	31	8	300.2	267	149	129	23	10	159	238	10	.239

BY GAME

GAME	DATE	OPP	H/A	W-L	SCORE	W/L PITCHER	ATL HRs	REC	POS	GB
1	4/5	CHC	H	W	16-5	Lowe (1-0)	Heyward (1), McCann (1)	1-0	T-1	—
2	4/7	CHC	H	W	3-2	Moylan (1-0)	Jones (1)	2-0	T-1	—
3	4/8	CHC	H	L	0-2	Hanson (0-1)	—	2-1	T-1	—
4	4/9	SF	A	L	4-5 (13)	Medlen (0-1)	—	2-2	3	-1
5	4/10	SF	A	W	7-2	Lowe (2-0)	Heyward (2)	3-2	2	-1
6	4/11	SF	A	L	3-6	Kawakami (0-1)	McCann (2), Heyward (3)	3-3	3	-2
7	4/12	SD	A	L	2-17	Jurrjens (0-1)	—	3-4	3	-3
8	4/14	SD	A	W	6-1	Hanson (1-1)	Glaus (1)	4-4	3	-3
9	4/15	SD	A	W	6-2	Hudson (1-0)	Prado (1)	5-4	T-2	-2
10	4/16	COL	H	W	9-5	Lowe (3-0)	Jones (2)	6-4	2	-2
11	4/17	COL	H	L	0-4	Kawakami (0-2)	--	6-5	T-3	-2
12	4/18	COL	H	W	4-3	O'Flaherty (1-0)	--	7-5	3	-1
13	4/20	PHI	H	W	4-3 (10)	Wagner (1-0)	Glaus (2), Heyward (4), McLouth (1)	8-5	1	T-1
14	4/21	PHI	H	L	0-2	Hudson (1-1)	--	8-6	2	-1
15	4/22	PHI	H	L	3-8	Lowe (3-1)	--	8-7	3	-2
16	4/23	NYM	A	L	2-5	Kawakami (0-3)	--	8-8	4	-2
17	4/24	NYM	A	L	1-3	Jurrjens (0-2)	--	8-9	5	-3
18	4/25	NYM	A	L	0-1	Hanson (1-2)	--	8-10	5	-3
19	4/26	STL	A	L	3-4	Saito (0-1)	--	8-11	5	-3
20	4/27	STL	A	L	4-5	Lowe (3-2)	--	8-12	5	-3 ½
21	4/28	STL	A	L	0-6	Kawakami (0-4)	--	8-13	5	-4 ½
22	4/29	STL	A	L	4-10	Jurrjens (0-3)	Heyward (5)	8-14	5	-4 ½
23	4/30	HOU	H	W	4-2	Hanson (2-2)	McLouth (2), Heyward (6)	9-14	5	-5
24	5/1	HOU	H	W	10-1	Hudson (2-1)	Heyward (7)	10-14	5	-4
25	5/2	HOU	H	W	7-1	Lowe (4-2)	--	11-14	5	-3 ½
26	5/4	WAS	A	L	3-6	Kawakami (0-5)	Heyward (8)	11-15	5	-4
27	5/5	WAS	A	W	7-6 (10)	Medlen (1-1)	Infante (1)	12-15	5	-4
28	5/6	WAS	A	L	2-3 (10)	O'Flaherty (1-1)	--	12-16	5	-5
29	5/7	PHI	A	L	0-7	Lowe (4-3)	--	12-17	5	-6
30	5/8	PHI	A	W	4-1	O'Flaherty (2-1)	--	13-17	5	-5
31	5/9	PHI	A	L	3-5	Kawakami (0-6)	--	13-18	5	-6
32	5/10	MIL	A	W	8-2	Hanson (3-2)	Glaus (3), Prado (2)	14-18	5	-6
33	5/11	MIL	A	W	11-3	Hudson (3-1)	Glaus (4), Conrad (1)	15-18	5	-5 ½
34	5/12	MIL	A	W	9-2	Lowe (5-3)	Conrad (2)	16-18	T-4	-4 ½



THE "VOICE" OF THE BRAVES TELLS HIS STORY

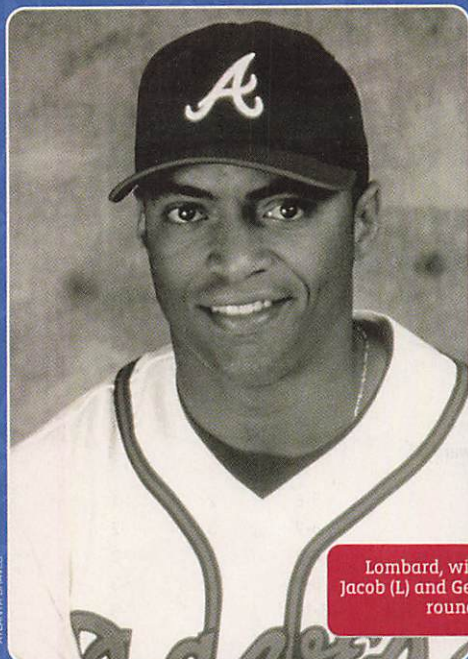
Now the Atlanta Braves' Hall of Fame broadcaster, **Pete Van Wieren**, tells his memorable life story in *Of Mikes and Men*, a must-have autobiography by a man who has witnessed all the highs and lows of Atlanta Braves baseball.

"Some people want to be good at what they do, some want to be known for what they do. You're in that first group."

—Don Sutton complimenting Pete's work ethic

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Lombard, with his wife, Judy, and sons, Jacob (L) and George, was the Braves' second-round draft pick in 1994.

CAREER CHANGE

FORMER OUTFIELD PROSPECT GEORGE LOMBARD ENDS PLAYING CAREER FOR CHANCE TO COACH IN RED SOX FARM SYSTEM

BY BRIAN KNAPP

IT WAS THE DECISION no athlete wants to make, but as George Lombard approached his 17th season in professional baseball, he took a long, hard look in the mirror. The former Braves outfielder knew his time as a player was at an end.

The 34-years-old Lombard sent out feelers to all 30 major league clubs and canvassed teams at the Baseball Winter Meetings in Indianapolis for three days in December. He entered into discussions with a number of teams, the Red Sox and Braves chief among them. Boston called back, and, in a matter of days, he found himself in the office of Red Sox general manager Theo Epstein, the architect behind two World Series championships.

After a productive three-hour meeting with Epstein, Lombard fielded an offer to serve as hitting coach for the Lowell Spinners, Boston's short-season Class-A affiliate in Lowell, Mass. The married father of two accepted.

"By that time, most of the openings in baseball had already been taken," said Lombard, whose family has roots in Boston. "My last three years, I'd gotten coaching offers. I loved to play, but I thought now would be a good time. The older I get, the more I enjoy being around younger kids."

Lombard, who played in the Boston farm system for two years (2004-05), spent the first few weeks on the job growing accustomed to life as a coach. Spring training allowed him not only to get his feet wet, but also to rub shoulders with Red Sox immortals

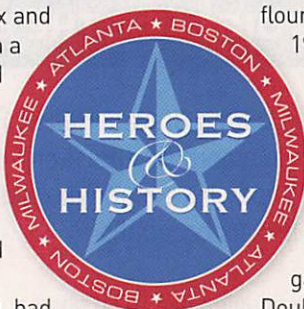
such as Carl Yastrzemski, Jim Rice and Dwight Evans.

"Basically, I'm learning something new every day," he said. "I've been able to relate to the different personalities. I want to keep things positive. All these kids have never failed. They've never had an 0-for-20. Every day's a challenge."

Lombard understands the day-to-day grind better than most. He was a career .265 hitter in the minor leagues, but never flourished. A second-round draft pick of the Braves in 1994, he was a two-sport standout at the Lovett School in Atlanta and turned down the chance to play college football at the University of Georgia.

Lombard played for four major league teams – Atlanta (1998-2000), Detroit (2002), Tampa Bay (2003) and Washington (2006) – in six seasons at the big league level, posting a cumulative .221 batting average with eight homers and 21 RBIs in just 144 games. Buoyed by a memorable 1998 season at Double-A Greenville, where he hit .308 with 22 home runs and 25 steals, the Atlanta native debuted with the Braves that September. Racked by injuries and inconsistent play, Lombard never fulfilled the superstar potential many forecasted for him.

"I always dreamed of getting 10 years in the big leagues," he said. "Unfortunately, it didn't work out that way, but I played the game the right way. I didn't cheat myself. I definitely had some injuries that cost me, but I was also given very good opportunities that I didn't do well in. There's nothing I can do about it."



Lombard enjoyed the time he spent with the Braves, even though that amounted to just 39 games at the big league level.

"That's my first family," he said. "I learned a lot. It's a great organization with great developmental skills. They gave me an opportunity and will always hold a special place in my heart. I was with them from the time I was 18 until I was 26. That's a long time."

Content with his latest move, Lombard claims he has yet to second-guess his decision to retire as a player. Still, there are times when he yearns to impact the game once more.

"I originally thought that I'd play one more year, but this was an awesome opportunity to get started," Lombard said. "I really enjoyed playing, and any time you do something [professionally] for 16 years of your life, it's going to be tough. But I'm having a blast. The time was right. I'm still in uniform. Maybe one day I'll be a general manager or in some other front office position or a major league hitting instructor."

Lowell, which won the Stedler Division in the New York-Penn League in 2009, will not open its season until June 18. Until then, Lombard will remain a fixture at the Red Sox spring training facility in Fort Myers, Fla. He expects to succeed in his new endeavor and plans to follow in the footsteps of his mentors, most notably current Braves bench coach Chino Cadahia and hitting coordinator Leon Roberts.

"I have good people skills. I've been there. I was drafted when I was 18 years old and played for some big-market teams and small-market teams. I have a lot of experience," Lombard said. "The biggest thrill is going to be seeing kids advance. I want to make them better. I had coaches who really helped me, coaches like Leon and Chino, and I talk to them to this day."

His regrets may be few, but Lombard admits he sometimes wonders how his life might have been different had he decided to spurn the Braves and accept a scholarship offer to become a running back for the University of Georgia.

"I put in a little thought," Lombard said. "Your life is full of different paths you can take. The only thing is not knowing how it would have turned out. If I had the injuries in football that I had in baseball, my career would have been over 10 years ago. I couldn't be happier with how my career ended up. Plus, I met my wife through baseball."

He met Judy Prado through a mutual friend during a series against the Florida Marlins in Miami. The two married in 2003 and have two sons, George, 4, and Jacob, 2.

HOW DO THEY DO THAT?

KEEP PLAYERS COOL

ATLANTA'S STICKY SUMMER weather can make for uncomfortable playing conditions, especially during day games. The Braves cannot let this interfere with their performance on the field.

In recent years, the team has switched from double-knit polyester uniforms to so-called "performance apparel" that helps them stay cool when the temperature and humidity soars. They now wear Majestic Athletic's Cool Base jerseys.

"We basically changed the jersey that the Braves wear, and switched it to a much lighter polyester moisture-wicking fabric," said Michael Johnson, vice president of marketing for Majestic Athletic, based in Easton, Pa. "Generally, it weighs about half of what the traditional double-knit polys used to weigh. It also has a lightweight performance gusset under the arms for breathability."

Bill Acree, the Braves' director of team travel and equipment manager, says the new jerseys are great for helping keep the players cool. Majestic designed these uniforms to provide moisture management, temperature control and ventilation.

"Some of these fabrics help keep the moisture away from the body," said Johnson. "They collect it, so if you're sweating, the moisture gets passed through the fabrics as opposed to getting trapped. These polyester fabrics have a way of passing that moisture from the internal body-facing side to help it fuse out to the other side, so that you actually stay pretty dry."

The Braves also wear moisture-wicking undergarments, according to Acree. He said the team drinks plenty of water and Powerade during hot weather. The training staff also uses towels soaked in ammonia to cool the players.

Majestic, which provides uniforms for all 30 major league teams, makes the pants the Braves wear, as well. They require a more durable, heavier weight fabric than the jerseys, in order to withstand sliding and diving.

- STEVE FALL



Players like Tim Hudson that perspire a lot know there's no escaping the heat, but the right uniform fabric helps them deal with it.

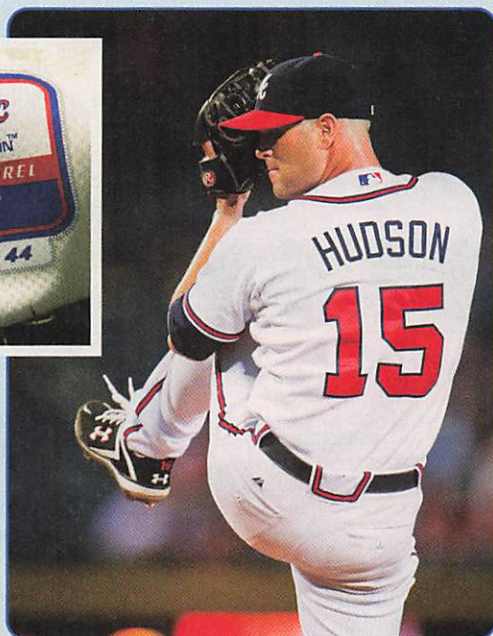


PHOTO: GARY/ATLANTA BRAVES

ALUMNI NOTES

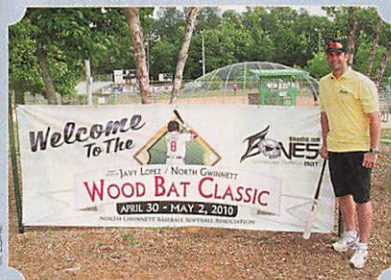


Hank Aaron (OF/1B, 1954-74) and Japanese home run king Sadaharu Oh will host the 20th annual World Children's Baseball Fair July 29-Aug. 6 in Tokyo. The event, which Aaron and Oh founded and first held in Los Angeles in 1990, will bring together children from 25 nations on five continents for clinics that promote and develop baseball skills, along with friendship and trust between participants from different cultures. Visit wcbf.org for additional information.

Bob Uecker (C, 1962-63, '67) had heart surgery April 30 for replacement of the aortic valve and a portion of the aortic root. The surgery was successful and he was released from the hospital May 6. He is expected to miss 10-12 weeks as a Brewers broadcaster.

Chris Hammond (LHP, 2002) hosted his annual Youth Foundation Celebrity Golf Tournament at the Renaissance Ross Bridge Golf Resort and Spa in Hoover, Ala., on April 19, and two of the participants were **John Smoltz** (RHP, 1988-99, 2001-08) and **Tom Glavine** (LHP, 1987-2002, '08). Hammond started the foundation a decade ago because kids in the rural East Alabama didn't have basic opportunities. He's raised money for baseball, football and soccer fields in Alabama, Georgia and Kentucky, focusing on rural areas, and recently expanded into schools and playgrounds.

Javy Lopez (C, 1992-2003) and his Bones Bat company sponsored the first North Gwinnett Wood Bat



Classic for ages 9/under-14 April 30-May 2 in the Atlanta suburb of Suwanee. Lopez (above) also con-

ducted a free hitting clinic for all players. Lopez, who already sells caps, as well as bats, at his web site (bonesbat.com) said he expects to begin selling t-shirts with his logo by the beginning of June.

Dale Murphy (OF/C/1B, 1976-90) was to throw out the first pitch at Greer Stadium on May 18 when the Nashville Sounds hosted the Portland Beavers. Earlier in the day, Murphy was to be the guest speaker at the Nashville Sounds Kick-Off Luncheon. Murphy also was scheduled to be the opening night guest of honor when the Columbia (S.C.) Blowfish open their home season May 27 in the Coastal Plain League for collegiate players.

Alan Embree (LHP, 1997-98) was designated for assignment by the Red Sox May 1.

Walt Hriniaik (C, 1968-69) was inducted in the inaugural class of the Natick (Mass.) High School Athletic Hall of Fame May 6.

Johnny O'Brien (2B, 1959) and his brother, Eddie, who also played in the majors, were honored with a tribute dinner May 2 by the Seattle (Wash.) University athletic department as part of the school's celebration of its 100th baseball season. The event was held at the Space Needle. Johnny is still the all-time leading scorer in Seattle University basketball history and was the first collegiate player to score 1,000 points in a single season.

Derrin Ebert (LHP, 1999) is in his first season as the baseball coach at Independence High in Glendale, Ariz.

Russ Ortiz (RHP, 2003-04) opted to become a free agent after he was designated for assignment by the Dodgers.

Billy Hoefl (LHP, 1964) died Mar. 16, at age 77, in Canadian Lakes, Mich.

Jose Capellan (RHP, 2004) is playing with the Hanwha Eagles in Korea.

* BIRTHDAYS *

JUNE

1 ST	ROY MAJTYKA (71) DEREK LOWE (37)
2 ND	JACK PIERCE (62) MIKE DAVEY (58) MIKE STANTON (43) KURT ABBOTT (41) MIKE KELLY (40)
3 RD	STEVE LYONS (50)
5 TH	EDDIE JOOST (94) RUSS ORTIZ (36)
6 TH	MERV RETTENMUND (67) LARRY HOWARD (65) TONY GRAFFANINO (38)
8 TH	PETE ORR (31)
9 TH	ROY SMALLEY (84)
10 TH	ELIAS SOSA (60) RICK CAMP (57) RANDY JOHNSON (54) JEFF BENNETT (30)
11 TH	FRANK THOMAS (81) ODALIS PEREZ (33)
12 TH	RYAN KLESKO (39) DAMON HOLLINS (36)
13 TH	ERNIE WHITT (58) DARRELL MAY (38) CORY ALDRIDGE (31)
15 TH	TY CLINE (71) AL CLOSTER (67) KEN HENDERSON (64) DUSTY BAKER (61) BRETT BUTLER (53)
16 TH	ERNIE JOHNSON (86) KEN JOHNSON (77) WALLY JOYNER (48)
18 TH	TAYLOR PHILLIPS (77) ANDRES GALARRAGA (49)
19 TH	BOB ASPROMONTE (72) BRUCE CHEN (33)
20 TH	PAUL BAKO (38)
21 ST	MIKE BEARD (60) LUIS RIVERA (32)
22 ND	WILLIE HARRIS (32) KENSHIN KAWAKAMI (35)
23 RD	DAVE BRISTOL (77) JOHN RABB (50)
25 TH	ALEJANDRO PEÑA (51) BRAD WOODALL (41) MICHAEL TUCKER (39)
26 TH	GIL GARRIDO (69)
27 TH	JOHNNY ESTRADA (34) DARYLE WARD (35) CHRIS WOODWARD (34)
28 TH	DON BAYLOR (61) KEVIN MCGLINCHY (33) RON MAHAY (38)
29 TH	BOB SHAW (77) JIMMY FREEMAN (59) EDDIE MILLER (53) PABLO MARTINEZ (41) TREY HODGES (32)
30 TH	GARRET ANDERSON (38)



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ABOUT KEEPIN' ON

SO, IT'S NOT NEWS. This season of promise did not start the way we all wanted it to start. In fact, it began just like last season - even though it seems worse.

At this writing, the Braves are 17-19 compared to 18-18 after 36 games in 2009. As late as June 27 last year, the Braves were only 34-40 (.459). As late as July 6, they were 39-43 (.476). Then a seemingly magical transformation took place, and the Braves made a serious run at the wild card playoff spot, right down to the final week of the season.

It was a wild ride and tremendous fun - for the players and for the fans. It also helped raise expectations for this season.

We are not here to tell you to expect the same turnaround this year. We're here to tell you that's the nature of baseball - bad starts and fast finishes and everything in between. We're here to tell you that in spite of all the doom and gloom you hear from the media that every loss is not the end of the world. It's just baseball.

Every team will lose at least 62 games and probably more, and every team will win at least 62 games. It's what each team does with the other 38 games that decides who goes to the playoffs and who goes home. Over the course of a 162-game season, that's a pretty fine line, one that's never straight and takes many twists and turns during the six-month schedule.

In the modern world of mass media coverage and a never-ending attempt to analyze and dissect each game, the true nature of baseball gets more and more distorted. Fortunately, Bobby Cox doesn't pay any attention to media coverage. Fortunately, he - perhaps as much or more than anyone that's ever managed - understands the true nature of baseball. And fortunately, he preaches it to his players, win or lose and no matter what month it is.

"Play the schedule," he says, over and over, knowing so very well that many things - good and bad - that can't be foreseen in April or May will transpire by the beginning of October. And those unforeseen events, in all likelihood, will decide which teams go to the playoffs.

While we certainly are not happy with the first six weeks of the season - I mean,

could it get much worse? - the fact is that the Braves still have time to get in the race. Hopefully, they won't wait as long to get with it as they did last year, because that furious finish fell short. Nevertheless, there's still time to get it together - and there's still the wondrous Jason Heyward to help make that happen.

No one has ever figured out baseball, and no one ever will. The perfect example took place April 20 at Turner Field, when a Braves lineup that appeared as dead as dead can be rallied from a 3-0 deficit to the Phillies with two outs in the ninth to win 4-3 in the 10th when Troy Glaus, Heyward and finally Nate McLouth hit home runs in three of the Braves' last four plate appearances.

My best friend, who knows more about baseball than most, said, "That ought to get them going!"

I immediately responded, "You ought to know better than that. There's no momentum in baseball."

And there isn't, as the Braves proved by losing their next nine games.

Hall of Fame manager Earl Weaver once said, "Momentum (in baseball) is the next day's starting pitcher."

The nature of baseball is completely different than that of football or basketball and a lot of other team sports. Emotion, the most essential component of momentum, can't help a batter hit a good fastball, nor from the other side of the field, can it help a pitcher that doesn't have his good stuff fool hitters.

There is no momentum in baseball. It's a grind, day after day, game after game, for six months... not two or three months. The best players and the best teams never lose sight of that. They just keep on grinding.

Bobby Cox received a preview of the unfinished portrait Steve Penley is painting for him and is thrilled. Don't miss it on page 15 and be sure to review the details of how you can be a part of this unique gift to Cox on pages 32-33.

THIS ISSUE OF CHOPTALK was mailed May 21. The July issue will be mailed June 22.



Smoltz and Glavine pose with "celebrity apprentice" Donald Trump, who probably picked up a few tips in golf and baseball from the two former pitchers.

BY PATTY RASMUSSEN



PITCHERS' DUEL

JOHN SMOLTZ defeated **Tom Glavine** in an April 23 golf match filmed for the Golf Channel's "**Donald J. Trump's Fabulous World of Golf**." The event was emceed by Trump and played at the Trump National Golf Club in Bedminster, N.J. The show aired May 17 on the Golf Channel. Smoltz won \$10,000 for one of his favorite causes, King's Ridge Christian School, in the Atlanta suburb of Alpharetta. "It was a great match," he said. "There was a lot of ribbing. We had a great time." Both are excellent golfers, and it took Smoltz until the 17th hole to close out Glavine in the match play competition.

BRAVES 400 FAN CLUB MEMBER, George Powers, recently managed to attend five baseball games at four professional levels in five days. Powers and his cousin, **Doug Powers**, an avid Dodgers fan from California, make one baseball trip together each year. This year they saw the Mississippi Braves (Double A) at Chattanooga on May 13, Arizona Diamondbacks at Atlanta Braves on May 14, Lehigh Valley (Triple A) at Gwinnett Braves on May 15, Charleston (S.C.) Riverdogs (Class A) at Rome Braves on May 16, and culminated with the Mets at Atlanta on May 17. George's job as a salesman, as well as vacations, have taken him across the United States. He's watched games in every major league stadium, except the new park in Minnesota. He's also seen a total of 128 minor league and spring training stadiums. "Last year's visit to the new Yankee Stadium and the Mets new Citi Field is among our most memorable trips," said George. "We sat in the outfield at Yankee Stadium with the rowdy fans last year. Those fans are crazy!"...

The home of **Derek** and **Carolyn Lowe** was one of four featured in this year's Peachtree Battle Friends House and Garden Tour, held May 4. The tour benefits Children's Healthcare of Atlanta. The Lowes' European Cream Retriever pups, Maximus and Moxie, went on the "disabled list" following dual arthroscopic surgeries to repair elbow dysplasia, a genetic elbow disorder somewhat common in medium- to large-sized dog breeds. The surgeries were

done on May 13, the off day after the Braves returned from the May 2-12 road trip to Washington, Philadelphia and Milwaukee...

Congratulations to **Matt** and **Leslee Diaz**, who announced they are expecting their third child in mid-December...

Billy Wagner spent the May 3 off day at home near Charlottesville, Va., in order to coach his sons' Little League game that evening. **Will** (12) and **Jeremy** (9) **Wagner** are teammates on the undefeated Braves. Wagner took the team Atlanta Braves t-shirts and caps...

A number of Braves wives, including **Kim Hudson**, **Lauren Johnson**, **Ashley McCann**, **Leslee Diaz**, **Jamie Reyes**, **Meredith Sammons** and **Catie Francoeur**, wife of former Braves and current Mets rightfielder **Jeff Francoeur**, hosted a baby shower for **Ginsey Boyer**, wife of former Braves pitcher **Blaine Boyer**, now with the Arizona Diamondbacks. The Boyers are expecting their first child, a boy, in early September. The shower was held May 16, in the Chairman's Suite at Turner Field during the game between the Braves and Diamondbacks. Also in attendance were Ginsey's mother, sisters, and other friends...

Pete Van Wieren autographed copies of his book, *Of Mikes and Men: A Lifetime of Braves Baseball*, at Manuel's Tavern in Atlanta on May 5. The entire book stock, 150 copies, sold during the two-hour signing...

Nicole Jones, wife of former Braves outfielder **Andruw Jones**, and their son, **Druw**, visited Turner Field on May 1. Druw and his team, the White Sox, marched around the warning track prior to the game and then sat in the stands for the game between the Braves and Houston Astros...

Terry Pendleton Jr., 18-year-old son of the Braves' hitting coach, spent the day at Turner Field, May 1, filming his dad for a senior project documentary. Terry, who graduated from Greater Atlanta Christian School on May 27, entitled the film, "A Day in the Life of My Dad," and focused his lens on Pendleton from start to finish prior to the ballgame...

The **Dale Murphy** clan continues to expand. Murphy and his wife, **Nancy**, parents of eight children, welcomed their third grandchild, a boy, **Nico Dale Murphy**, on Mar. 10. Nico, who weighed 9 pounds, 9 ounces at birth, is the son of their oldest son, **Chad**, and his wife, **Mindy**. The Murphys' second son, **Shawn**, was claimed off waivers by the Philadelphia Eagles from the Tampa Bay Buccaneers. Shawn, an offensive guard, was a fourth-round draft pick by the NFL's Miami Dolphins in 2008...

Nolan Fontana, grandson of Braves Hall of Famer and 1957 World Series MVP **Lou Burdette**, was selected to participate in the USA Baseball Collegiate team trials to be held in Cary, N.C., this summer...

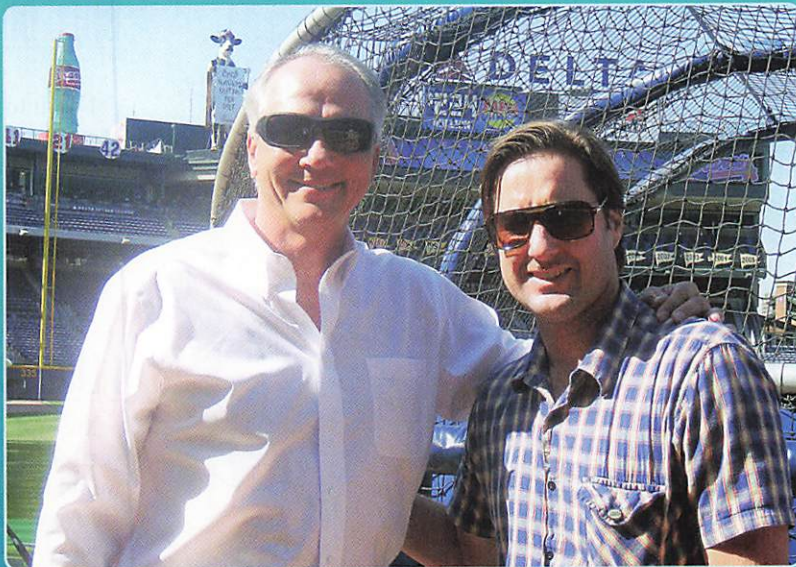
Tom Glavine was the speaker at a national sales meeting for Mizuno USA April 28 at Lake Lanier Islands Legacy Lodge...

Glavine, his wife, **Chris**, and their five children will take a two-week trip to Italy in

late June, culminating in a papal audience at the Vatican...

Brian Jordan is a former player who wears many hats. In addition to his broadcasting duties, Jordan is also a published

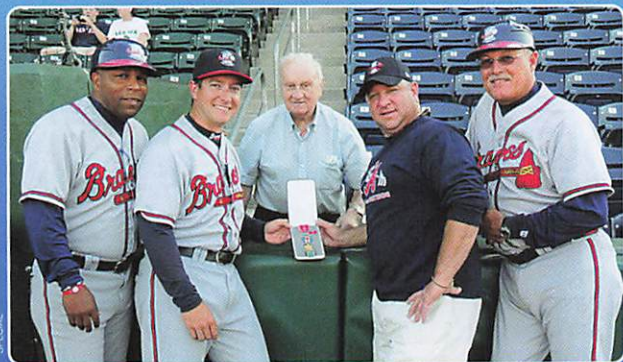
been dating for several years. Wilson briefly toured the clubhouse prior to watching batting practice from behind the batting cage and then watched the game from the broadcast booth.



PATTY RASMUSSEN

JOE'S GUEST

ACTOR LUKE WILSON (Old School, My Dog Skip, 3:10 to Yuma) visited Turner Field on April 30 as the guest of broadcaster **Joe Simpson**. Wilson (R) and Simpson's daughter, **Meg**, have



Walter Victor shows his WWII medals to the Rome staff (L-R) Bobby Moore, Jonathan Schuerholz, Mike Dunn and Randy Ingle.

ALL ABOARD!

FORMER BRAVES 400 CLUB PRESIDENT and its reigning "Mr. Baseball", **Johnny Tallant**, took a baseball excursion April 13 with former Braves photographer **Walter Victor** (himself a former 400 Club "Mr. Baseball") and wife, **Ruth**, and fellow 400 Club member, **James Reese**. The adventure took them to the **Johnny Mize** Museum, located on the campus of Piedmont College in Demorest, Ga., lunch at popular Zeb's BBQ in Danielsville, Ga., the Ty Cobb Museum in Royston, Ga., and finally a game between the Rome Braves and Greenville Drive in Greenville, S.C. "It was a long day for Walter and Ruth, but it was a lot of fun," said Tallant. "Walter even sold a few copies of his book [Brave at Heart: The Life and Lens of Walter Victor] at lunch!"

TALKIN' CHOP

LETTERS & PHOTOS FROM OUR READERS

WHETHER YOU'RE HAVING FUN AT TURNER FIELD, EXPERIENCING A CLOSE ENCOUNTER WITH YOUR FAVORITE BRAVES PLAYER, OR JUST SHOWING OFF YOUR COLLECTION OF BRAVES STUFF OR TRYING ON YOUR NEW BRAVES SHIRT, WE WANT TO HEAR ABOUT IT AND SEE A PICTURE.



BALL ONE! ✉

I went to Disney for my first spring training this year at nine months old and had lots of fun. I got a special ball from Bobby Cox that said: To Reese, Always Stay a Braves Fan! Your Friend, Bobby Cox #6, 2/28/10. Thank you, Bobby, for making this "Baby Brave" very happy!

REESE GOLDBERG
Bonita Springs, Fla.

I LIVE FOR THIS! ✉

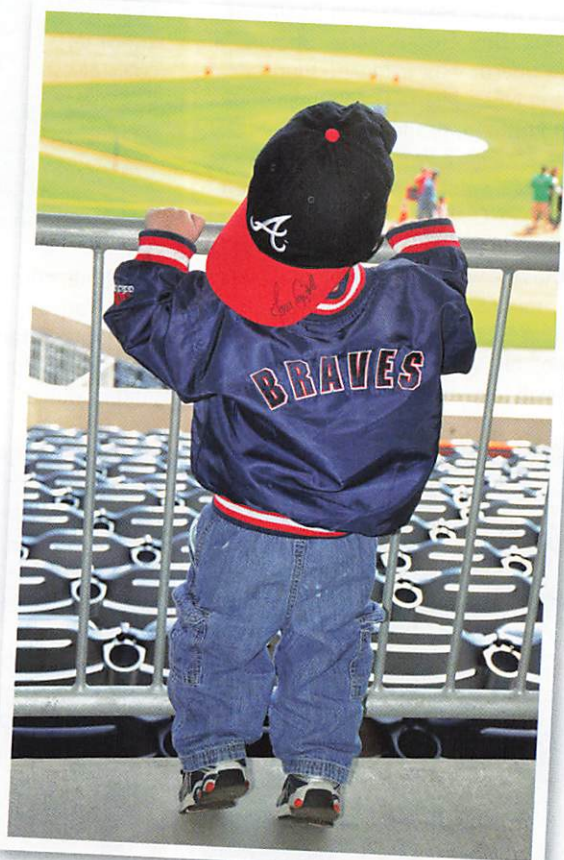
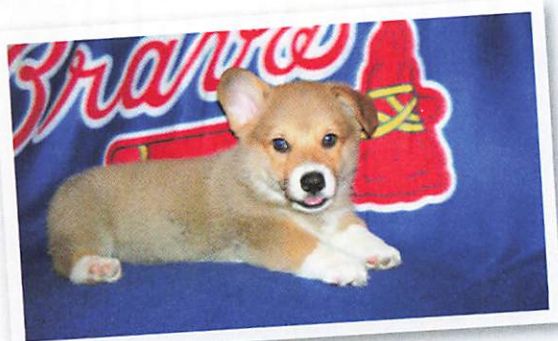
My husband, Chris, took this picture of my almost 2-year-old, Joshua, at the Gwinnett Braves open house. He would stare at the field and then turn around and yell, "Baseball!" It is great to have kids as excited about baseball as I am!

HEATHER BRANSCOMB
Mineral Bluff, Ga.

HUDDY THE CORGI ✉

I'd like to introduce you to Hudson's Perfect Game, our nine-week-old Pembroke Welsh Corgi. "Huddy" joins his brother, Brodie, in our Braves-loving family. Of course, he is named after one of our favorite Braves, Tim Hudson. Hopefully, we'll be cheering for many Atlanta victories this summer!

CHERYL MARTIN
Rome, N.Y.

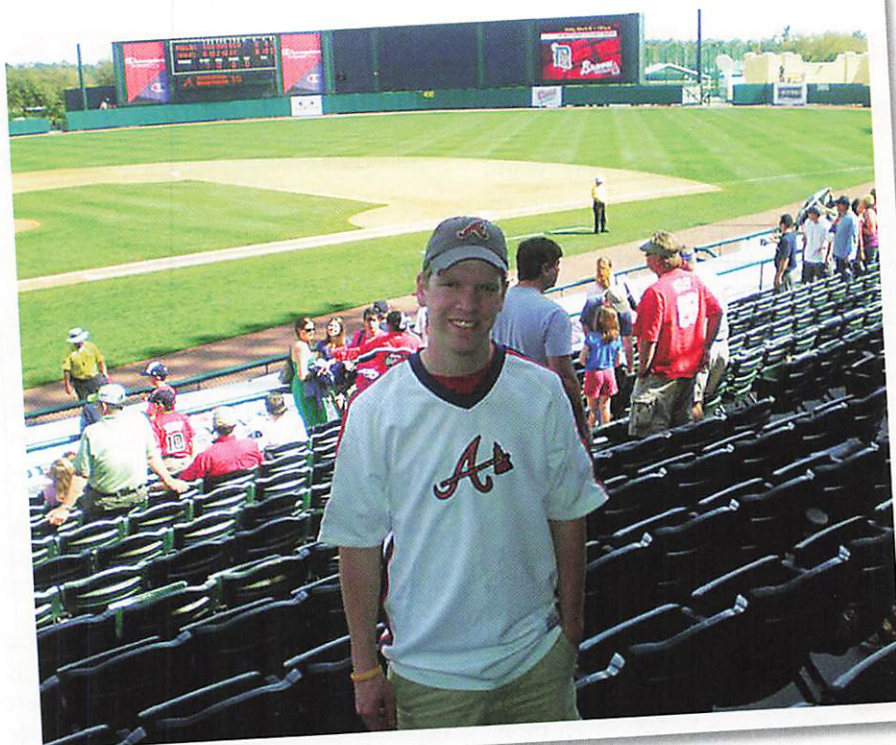


CHOPTALK AND THE ATLANTA BRAVES SUPPORT OUR TROOPS

LISTENING IN FLORIDA

As a loyal Braves fan all of my life, I have grown accustomed to listening to or watching the Braves every night they play, season after season. Recently, I moved to Palm Coast, Fla., from Murfreesboro, Tenn., and find it a lot harder to watch the Braves every night on television like I used to. Instead, I find myself turning to the XM radio broadcast of the Braves to find out how my team is doing. I usually try to make it to two or three games a year. Last year, I went to Opening Day, inter-league play with the Braves shutting out the Yankees, and a game vs. the Mets. This spring, I went to Champion Stadium with my brother, Clay, and my dad and saw what I think will be a great 2010 team. Hopefully, later this season I can make it to Miami to see the Braves. Thank you so much for providing a monthly magazine to Braves fans like myself.

DREW MITCHELL
Palm Coast, Fla.

SHARE YOUR BRAVES FEVER! WRITE TO US 

Talkin' Chop c/o ChopTalk
P.O. Box 81247
Conyers, Ga. 30013-9247



Letters@ChopTalkonline.com

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WRITE THE BRAVES

Atlanta Braves
P.O. Box 4064
Atlanta, Ga. 30302

For the Braves players, Bobby Cox, the coaches, broadcasters, or members of the front office.

If you request a response, be sure to include a self-addressed, stamped envelope. Never send anything of value that you want returned. This is no guarantee of a reply.

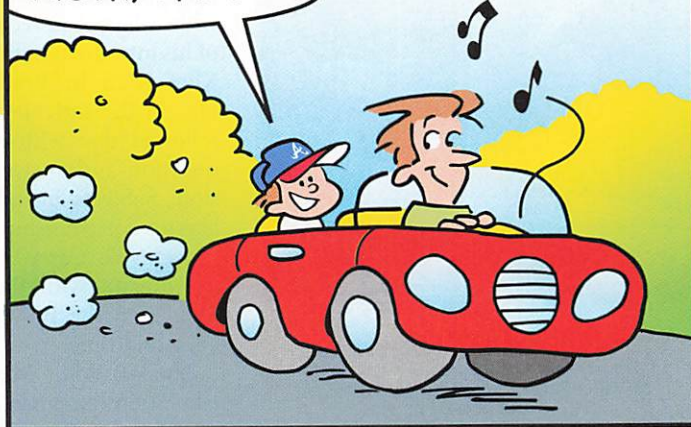
HIT PARADE



STAY TUNED
FOLKS
'CAUSE THE
HITS
JUST KEEP
ON COMING!



HE'S TALKING ABOUT
MARTIN PRADO,
RIGHT, DAD?



XTRA INNINGS

MILWAUKEE NEVER FORGETS

BURDETTE CELEBRATED

The hero of the Braves' 1957 World Series Championship will soon have a permanent place outside Milwaukee's ballpark. The late Lou Burdette, who beat the Yankees three times in the Series, twice by shutouts, will be added to the Walk of Fame outside Miller Park in a pre-game ceremony on June 11.

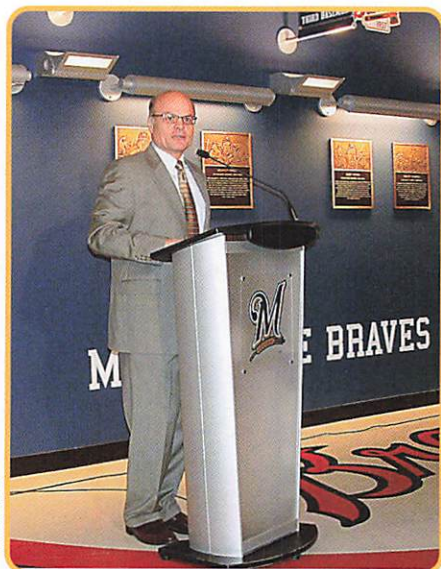
A granite home plate will bear the fidgety righthander's name, uniform number 33, a facsimile signature, and the years he played for Milwaukee, 1953-1963.

The Walk of Fame was established in 2001, the year Miller Park opened. Originally it served as an unofficial Hall of Fame for Brewers players. In 2007 Milwaukee Braves became eligible in the balloting. Like the Cooperstown shrine, inclusion in the Walk of Fame requires 75 percent of votes cast by Wisconsin media representatives and Brewers officials.

Burdette will join Braves teammates Eddie Mathews, Warren Spahn, Bob Uecker and general manager John Quinn. Members of Burdette's family planned to attend the ceremony.

- BOB BUEGE

THE HONOR ROLL



Dr. Eddie Mathews Jr. speaks about his father, Eddie, at the Honor Roll induction at Miller Park, where Felix Mantilla also was honored.

Former catcher Stan Lopata checks out his name on the Milwaukee Braves Monument outside Miller Park before heading to a banquet where he was honored.



In a ceremony preceding the Braves-Brewers game in Milwaukee on May 11, Felix Mantilla and Eddie Mathews were inducted to the Milwaukee Braves Wall of Honor in the concourse inside Miller Park. Dr. Eddie Mathews Jr., the Hall of Fame third baseman's eldest offspring, spoke on behalf of his late father. Mantilla also made brief remarks.

Before the game, stadium announcer Robb Edwards narrated a tribute to Mantilla and Mathews, incorporating video footage and live shots of the two men.

The Wall of Honor was initiated in 2004 and has recently been upgraded and expanded. It features vertical banners depicting six Milwaukee Braves and bronze plaques of the featured ballplayers. Previous inductees include Warren Spahn, Johnny Logan, Andy Pafko, Bobby Thomson and Bob Uecker.

- BOB BUEGE

MBHA BANQUET

More than 200 members and guests of the Milwaukee Braves Historical Association (MBHA) paid tribute to three former Milwaukee Braves, one posthumously, at a banquet on May 13 in Potawatomi Casino's Woodland Dreams Ballroom.

Versatile Felix Mantilla, leading off the evening, brought the house down with a hilarious recounting of his introduction to the Ku Klux Klan in Bradenton, Fla., in the early 1950s. He followed that with a lively question-and-answer session. Subjects included his keystone partnership with Hank Aaron at Jacksonville, Casey Stengel falling asleep in the dugout with the original New York Mets, and the Braves' 1957 World Series Championship.

The late Eddie Mathews, Braves Hall of Fame third baseman, was recalled through a narrated series of vintage photographs,

ranging from his days as a star high school football and baseball player to his Braves managerial and coaching career. Afterwards, Dr. Eddie Mathews Jr., an anesthesiologist and the son of the Braves slugger, charmed the audience with stories and memories of his dad.

The evening's final speaker was Arizona resident Stan Lopata, a short-time Brave (1959-60) but a former all-star with the Phillies and a member of the 1950 "Whiz Kids." The former catcher was accompanied by Betty Lopata, his wife of 63 years, to whom he sang a portion of "My Melody of Love," in Polish a la Bobby Vinton. Lopata also reminisced about his recently deceased teammate Robin Roberts.

- BOB BUEGE

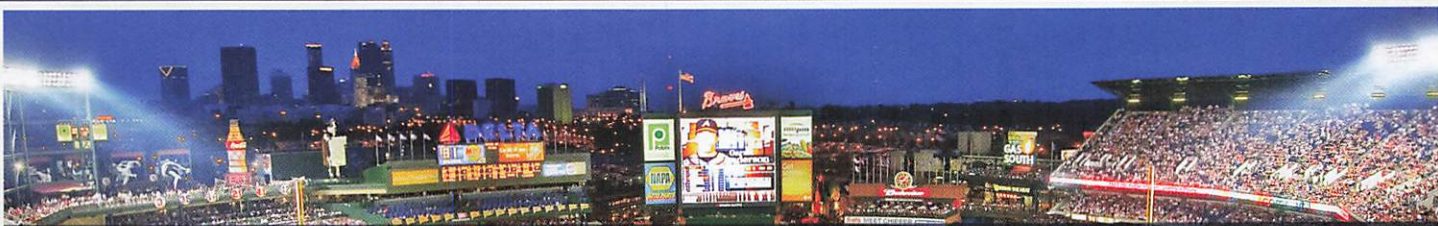
NO. 755!

On July 20, 1976, Hank Aaron hit his 755th and final career home run at Milwaukee's County Stadium off the Angels' Dick Drago. That stood as the all-time record for 31 years, until 2007, and the Brewers commemorated the historic event

May 16 by giving away bobblehead dolls of Aaron (above), then a Brewer, hitting his final home run in the city and at the stadium where his big league career began in 1954. The promotion was part of the Brewers' season-long celebration of their 40th season, and the Aaron bobbleheads were given to all fans that attended the game.



SCOTT PAULUS/MILWAUKEE BREWERS



A VIEW FROM ABOVE THE CROWD

THE CHAIRMAN'S SUITE

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PRICE

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Enjoying Braves baseball in a private suite at Turner Field is an experience like no other in Atlanta sports. The Braves are offering \$100 suite tickets on weekend games throughout the 2010 season. The ticket includes a \$30 food and beverage credit and access to our newly renovated 755 Club – Delta SKY360° Lounge.

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404.577.9100

braves.com/tickets



Tour the Home of the Braves



TURNER FIELD



VISIT THE BRAVES MUSEUM & HALL OF FAME AT TURNER FIELD and view more than 600 Braves artifacts and photographs on display. See items from the team's years in Boston (1871-1952), Milwaukee (1953-65), and Atlanta (1966-present), including Hank Aaron's 715th home run bat and ball, the 1995 World Series trophy and much more.

TAKE A ONE-HOUR GUIDED TOUR OF TURNER FIELD to many areas off limits during games, such as the press box, clubhouse, dugout and the SunTrust Club. Group and school tours are offered year-round, including specialized tours on the subjects of math and careers in sports. Call 404-614-2311.



BOBBY COX \$6 DAYS

In honor of Bobby Cox's last season as Braves manager, tours of Turner Field will be \$6 on the following days in 2010.

2010	April 10	Bobby earned his first managerial win in 1978
	May 21	Bobby's birthday
	June 16	Bobby became the winningest manager in Braves history with 1,005 wins in 1998
	July 11	Bobby managed the 2000 All-Star Game at Turner Field
	August 28	Bobby earned his 1,500th career win in 1999
	September 29	Bobby earned his 2,000th career win in 2004

For tour or museum information call 404-614-2311 or order tickets at braves.com/tours

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MARKDOWN MONDAYS

Save 10% on your entire purchase at the Braves Clubhouse Store at CNN Center on any Monday from March 15, 2010 through October 25, 2010.

\$500 SHOPPING SPREE*

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Starting in May 2010, visit the Braves Clubhouse Store at CNN Center and register for a chance to win a \$500 Shopping Spree of regularly-priced merchandise. One (1) winner will be selected each month during May, June, July, and August 2010.

* No purchase necessary. Open to legal U.S. residents 18 or older at the time of entry. Void where prohibited. Subject to official rules. Please visit the Braves Clubhouse Store at CNN Center for complete contest rules.

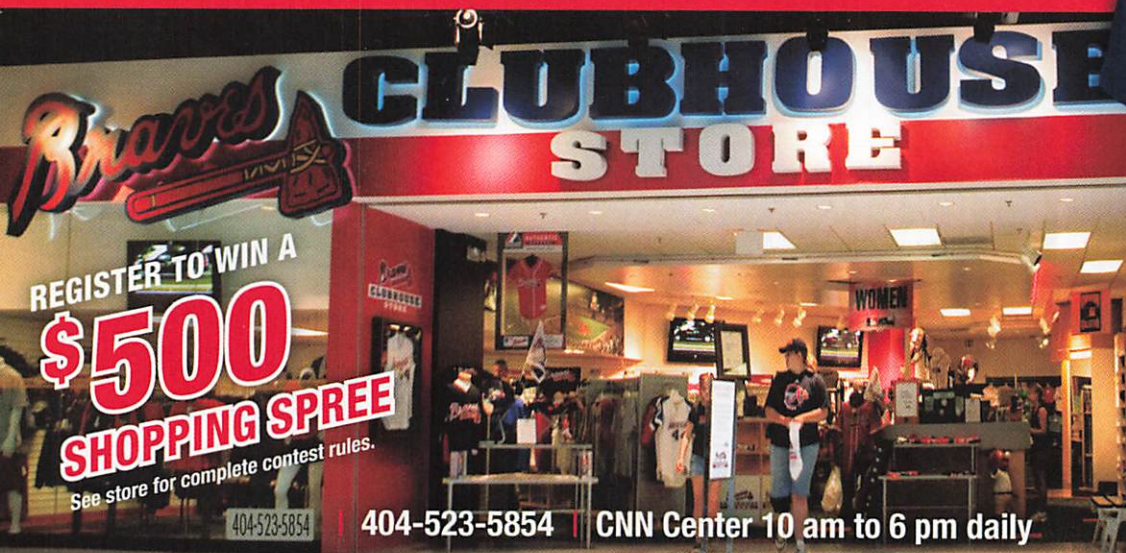
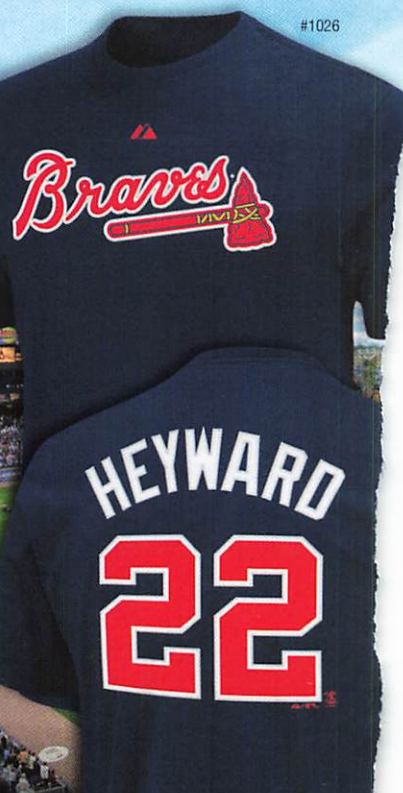


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